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AN ANTHOLOGY SELECTED
FROM THE NOVELISTS BY

L. A. G. Strong

London
George Allen & Unwin Ltd
Museum Street

First published in 1942

FOR
MY MOTHER

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FOREWORD

WHEN Mr. Stanley Unwin asked me to undertake this collection, my first motive for accepting was that at last I should be compelled to fill some of the lamentable gaps in my reading. None the less, my conscience bothered me. I knew something about the English novel of the past twenty years, but this assignment covered two hundred. Ought not the work to have gone to someone better read?

When I surveyed the field, however, I took heart. The mass of material is so enormous that fifty such anthologies could be compiled without overlapping. Any single set of choices must be partial and arbitrary, as is this. I have tried to offset my limitations by picking the brains of my friends and calling in all the help I could get. Even so, I should need to compile a fresh collection every three months, for many years, before I could feel that the ground had been mapped out, much less covered. Impossible economic conditions would be needed, too, in order to represent the last fifty years at all adequately. As things are, copyright fees must be kept low, or the book would become prohibitively expensive.

Pleasant though the game of compilation is, it raises a number of problems, and I fear I have solved none of them. How is one to interpret "domestic"? As a strictly indoor word? Or can outdoor life be shown? On what principle should the selections be made? From as many authors as possible? Or from those who best represent the domestic scene? Given equal clarity of presentation, should one make for the

well-known, or the out-of-the-way? Should excellence of writing come first, or wealth of detail? Are we looking for literary quality or for historical information? Will the selection reveal class prejudice, so called, and how can one guard against this? Should the compiler yield to his own bias of taste, or fight against it? Which is more important, what people do, or what they feel? Should one make for the most vivid extracts, and regard each individually, or should the choice be subordinated to the making of a composite whole? In what order should the selections be arranged? Chronological? Alphabetical? Or by subject? Should any commentary be added, or should they be left to speak for themselves?

I set out these questions more to show that I am aware of them than with any hope of providing satisfactory answers. Rightly or wrongly, but in each case unrepentantly, I have answered them as follows. "Domestic" I have taken to cover any normal happening in or relating to home life. English I have interpreted strictly, leaving out Irish and Welsh scenes, and knowing better than to include under this label anything North of the Border. "Novel" I have interpreted strictly too, and left out short stories. In making the selections, I have tried to steer a middle course. Representation of the subject has seemed to me more important than representation of authors. On the other hand, three or four nineteenth-century authors could between them cover almost all the domestic life of their period. I have denied myself fiercely with Jane Austen, tried to keep down the extracts from Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and to avoid dragging in extracts from authors simply because they are little known—a temptation familiar to any anthologist, however austere he may reject it. I have given long extracts rather than short, in an effort to avoid scrappiness: and have made cuts, indicated by

dots, where they seemed helpful. I have thought wealth of detail more important than literary excellence, but have tried not to fall below a certain standard of writing, if only because bad writing does not convey the information properly.

As for class prejudice, the word domestic implies a certain level of comfort and stability, and differences in custom do not clearly emerge until that level has been reached and passed. Poverty is more standardised. That most of the scenes are from middle-class life is due less, I venture to believe, to my bourgeois predilections than to the fact that below the hunger line there is less difference between countries and between peoples than above it. I have allowed my liking for rural scenes very much less freedom than it wanted, and have tried to keep a balance between doing and feeling—the ideal authors, for my purpose, being those in whom abundance of action reveals what is passing in the actors' minds. I have gone for individual selections, completely distrusting any plan for the whole, which would probably be no better than an idea or a prejudice, and lead to the exclusion of extracts that were inconvenient to it. The same distrust made me refuse to group the selections under subjects, which, in my hands at any rate, could lead easily to forced antitheses and congruities. I have chosen chronological order, on the basis of each author's date of birth. The other chronological method, by the date of publication of the novel, raised worse difficulties. In a very few cases I have made a compromise for what seemed a good reason. For instance, when two authors collaborated, I have classified by the date of publication. But no extract is seriously out of place. I have added no commentary, in the belief that each extract explains itself.

When I read the extracts over, I was struck by the fact that a disproportionate number dealt with feminine activities. This is only natural, as women have more to do in and

about the house than men. I noticed, too, that as a whole the collection looks on the brighter side of life, that cheerfulness has a better innings than melancholy. There, perhaps, I have been taken off my guard. Only the day before yesterday, a friend asked if my "undeviating optimism" dated from childhood. Since it had not occurred to me that I was blatantly optimistic, either as man or writer, I could not tell her: any more than I can to-day tell whether the prevailing cheerfulness of this collection derives from the material or from a bias in myself.

Like every other anthologist, I have not been able to secure all the extracts I wanted, and have been obliged with sorrow to omit several I would have liked to put in. Temptations to stretch the term "novel" were very serious; and some contemporary authors were very expensive.

I owe my thanks to several friends who have helped me with selections and advice. Sir Hugh Walpole not only gave Mr. Unwin the original idea for the book, but gave me a list of suggestions which staggered me by its range, the more so as it was made entirely from memory. Miss E. M. Delafield made several valuable suggestions, as did Mr. Frank Swinnerton. But I owe most to Miss Barbara Cooper, whose scholarship is as inexhaustible as her kindness, and without whose generous help I could never have got the book together at all.

I must thank, too, the officials of the Reading Room at the British Museum, and of the Paddington and Kensington Public Libraries, for their courtesy and helpful kindness—the last-named in particular, since, although I was formerly a resident of the Royal Borough, neither Miss Cooper nor I had any title to their good offices.

L. A. G. S.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Foreword</i>	V
SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761)	
<i>A Daughter and her Parents</i>	13
HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754)	
<i>A Visit to the Theatre</i>	17
LAURENCE STERNE (1713-1768)	
<i>A Hasty Christening</i>	22
TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT (1721-1771)	
<i>Fashionable Life</i>	25
OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)	
<i>Confidence Trick</i>	27
FANNY BURNEY (1752-1840)	
<i>At the Ball</i>	30
JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817)	
<i>Family Finances</i>	34
THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK (1785-1866)	
(i) <i>In the Garden</i>	40
(ii) <i>A Clergyman</i>	43
EMILY EDEN (1797-1869)	
<i>Married Women</i>	43
ROBERT SMITH SURTEES (1803-1864)	
<i>The Table</i>	46
EDWARD BULWER LYTTON (1803-1873)	
<i>An Introduction</i>	52
BENJAMIN DISRAELI (1804-1881)	
<i>A Homecoming</i>	56

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL (1810-1865)

- (i) *A Banknote* 60
- (ii) *Tending the Sick* 65

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

- (i) *Going to Court* 70
- (ii) *Finances* 75
- (iii) *Undergraduate Life* 78

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

- (i) *A Christening* 84
- (ii) *The Difficulties of Housekeeping* 91
- (iii) *In Church* 95
- (iv) *An Evening's Entertainment* 96

CHARLES READE (1814-1884)

- Christmas Time* 100

ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1815-1882)

- Entertaining* 104

CHARLOTTE BRONTË (1816-1855)

- A Girls' School* 110

ALBERT SMITH (1816-1860)

- Unwelcome Guests* 114

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-1875)

- (i) *The Tailor's* 117
- (ii) *At the Fair* 122

GEORGE ELIOT (1819-1880)

- (i) *Landlord and Tenant* 126
- (ii) *A Clergyman's Home* 134
- (iii) *Brother and Sister* 138
- (iv) *Dressing for Tea* 146

ANNE BRONTË (1820-1849)

- Trials of a Governess* 150

THOMAS HUGHES (1822-1896)

- At a Boys' School* 154

DURING THE LAST 200 YEARS	xi PAGE
CHARLOTTE MARY YONGE (1823-1901) <i>A Wedding</i>	157
DINAH MARIA CRAIK (1826-1887) <i>The Doctor's Discovery</i>	159
GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909) <i>Wine</i>	164
HENRY KINGSLEY (1830-1876) <i>Children in Church</i>	169
MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON (1837-1915) <i>A Homecoming</i>	172
RHODA BROUGHTON (1840-1920) <i>Making Toffee</i>	176
THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928) (i) <i>To Help with the Housework</i> (ii) <i>A Parting</i>	178 181
WALTER RAYMOND (1853-1930) <i>A Frock</i>	186
GEORGE GISSING (1857-1903) <i>A Difficult Request</i>	187
EDEN PHILLPOTTS (1862-) <i>Cottage Tea</i>	191
ARTHUR MORRISON (1863-) <i>Danger at the Door</i>	198
HERBERT GEORGE WELLS (1866-) <i>Callers</i>	201
ERNEST DOWSON (1867-1900) AND ARTHUR MOORE (1866-) <i>An At Home</i>	207
JOHN GALSWORTHY (1867-1933) <i>A Dinner</i>	209

	PAGE
ARNOLD BENNETT (1867-1931)	
(i) <i>St. James</i>	215
(ii) <i>Starting for Brighton</i>	217
WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM (1874-)	
<i>Appointments</i>	218
COMPTON MACKENZIE (1883-)	
<i>A Supper Party</i>	222
FRANK SWINNERTON (1884-)	
<i>Over the Telephone</i>	225
HUGH WALPOLE (1884-1941)	
<i>A Christmas Tree</i>	228
DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE (1885-1930)	
<i>An Accident</i>	231
ELIZABETH M. DELAFIELD (1890-)	
<i>Daughter and Parents</i>	234
LETTICE COOPER (1897-)	
<i>Children Playing</i>	239
ELIZABETH BOWEN (1899-)	
<i>Shopping</i>	242
ROSAMOND LEHMANN (1901-)	
<i>Preparing for the Dance</i>	244
NORMAN COLLINS (1907-)	
<i>Suburban Amenities</i>	248
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	251

A Daughter and her Parents

OH my dear friend, trial upon trial! I went down this morning to breakfast with an uneasy heart, wishing for an opportunity to appeal to my mamma when she retired afterwards to her own room; but unluckily there was the odious Solmes with assurance in his looks!

The creature must needs rise from his seat and take one that was next mine. I removed mine to a distance, and then down I sat abruptly enough.

He took the removed chair and drew it so near me that in sitting down he pressed upon my hoop, at which I was so offended that I removed to another. I own I had too little command of myself, but I could not help it; I knew not what I did. I saw my papa was excessively displeased. When angry, no man's countenance ever shows it so much as my papa's. "Clarissa Harlowe," said he with a big voice, and there he stopp'd! "Sir!" said I, and curtsied. I trembled and put my chair nearer the wretch. I felt my face all in a glow.

"Sit by me, love," said my kind mamma, "and make tea."

I removed to her side with pleasure, and being thus indulgently put into employment, soon recovered myself, and in the course of breakfast asked some questions of Mr. Solmes, which I would not have done, but to make up with my papa. "*Proud spirits may be brought to,*" whispered my sister to me with an air of triumph and scorn.

My mamma was all kindness and condescension. I asked her if she were pleased with the tea, she said "yes," softly, calling me *dear*; told me she was pleased with all I did. I was

very proud of this encouraging goodness, and all blew over, as I hoped, between my papa and me, for he spoke kindly to me two or three times.

Before breakfast was over my papa withdrew with my mamma, telling her he wanted to speak to her. My brother gave himself some airs, which I understood well enough. But at last he rose and went away, my sister following him.

I saw what all this was for; so I stood up to go also, the man hemming up for a speech, rising and beginning to set his splay feet in an approaching posture. I curtsied "Your servant, Sir." The man cried "Madam" twice, and looked like a fool. But I went away—to find my brother. He was gone to walk in the garden with my sister.

I had just got to my room, and began to think of sending Hannah to beg an audience of my mamma, when Shorey, her woman, brought me her commands to attend her in her closet.

My papa, Hannah told me, had just gone out of it with a positive, angry countenance. Then I as much dreaded the audience as I had wished for it before.

I went down; but approached her trembling, and my heart in visible palpitations.

She saw my concern. Holding out her kind arms, "Come kiss me, my dear," said she, with a smile like a sunbeam breaking through the cloud that overshadows her benign aspect. "Why flutters my jewel so?"

This sweetness, with her goodness just before, confirmed my apprehensions. My mamma saw the bitter pill wanted gilding.

"Oh my mamma!" was all I could say; and I clasped my arms round her neck, and my face sunk into her bosom.

"My child! restrain your feelings," said she; "I dare not

trust myself with you." And my tears trickled down her bosom, as hers bedewed my neck.

Oh the words of kindness all to be expressed in vain that fell from her lips!

"Lift up your sweet face, my best child, my own Clarissa. Oh my daughter! best beloved of my heart, lift up a face ever precious to me. Why these sobs? Is an apprehended duty so affecting a thing that before I can speak you can guess at what I have to say to you? I am glad then that I am spared the pains of breaking to you what has been made a reluctant task to me."

And drawing her chair near mine, she put her arms round my neck, and my cheek wet with tears next her own.

"You know, my dear," she said, "what I undergo every day for peace. Your papa is a good man, but will neither be controlled nor persuaded. You are a good child," she was pleased to say, "you would not wilfully break that peace, which it costs me so much to preserve. Obedience is better than sacrifice. Oh my Clary! I see your perplexity (loosing her arm and rising, not willing I should see how much she herself was affected). I will leave you a moment. Answer me not (for I was essaying to speak, and had, as soon as she took her dear cheek from mine, dropped down upon my knees, my hands clasped and lifted up in a supplicating manner): I am not prepared for your expostulations. I will leave you to recover from your agitation. And I charge you, on my blessing, that all this my truly maternal tenderness be not thrown away upon you."

And then she withdrew into the next apartment; wiping her eyes, as she went: mine overflowed.

She returned, having recovered more steadiness.

Still on my knees, I had thrown my face across her chair.

"Look up to me, my dear Clary. No sullenness, I hope?"

"No, indeed, my revered mamma." And I arose. I bent my knee.

She raised me. "No kneeling to me but with knees of duty and compliance. Your heart must bend. It is absolutely determined. Prepare yourself therefore to receive your *papa*, when he visits you by-and-by. On this quarter of an hour depends the peace of my future life, the satisfaction of the family, and your own security . . . and I charge you *besides*, on my blessing, that you think of being Mrs. Solmes."

There went the dagger to my heart, and down I sunk. When I recovered, I found myself in the arms of my Hannah, my sister's Betty holding open my palm, my linen scented with hartshorn, and my mamma gone. Had I been less kindly treated, I had stood it all with less visible emotion, but to be bid on the blessing of a mother so dearly beloved to think of being Mrs. Solmes, what a denunciation was that!

Shorey came in with a message, delivered in her solemn way. "Your mamma, Miss, is concerned for your disorder, she expects you down in an hour, and bid me say that she then hopes everything from your duty."

Within that time my mamma came up to me.

"Come, my dear," said she, "we will go into your library."

She took my hand, led the way, made me sit down by her, and after she had inquired how I did, began in a strain as if she supposed I had made use of the intervening space to overcome all my objections. She was pleased to tell me that my *papa* and she, in order to spare me, had taken the whole affair upon themselves.

Just then came my *papa*, with a sternness in his looks that made me tremble. He took two or three turns about my chamber, and then said to my mamma, who was silent as soon as she saw him,—*"My dear, dinner is near ready, let*

us have you soon down, your daughter in your hand, if worthy of the name." And down he went, casting on me a look so stern that I was unable to say one word to him.

My mamma called me her good child, and kissed me, told me my papa should not know that I had made such opposition. "Come, my dear, shall we go down?" and took my hand.

This made me start. "What, Madam, go down, to let it be supposed we were talking of preparation. O my beloved mamma, command me not upon such a supposition."

"And do you design not to give me hope. Perverse girl!" *rising and flinging from me.* "When I see you next, let me know what blame I have to cast upon myself for my indulgence to you."

She made a little stop at the chamber door.

"O madam," cried I, "whose favour can I hope for, if I lose my mamma's?"

SAMUEL RICHARDSON: *Clarissa Harlowe*

A Visit to the Theatre

IN the first row then of the first gallery did Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge, take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played, he said, "It was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time, without putting one another out." While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cries out to Mrs. Miller, "Look, look, madam, the very picture of the man in the end of the Common-Prayer book before the Gunpowder-Treason service." Nor could he help observing,

with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted, "That here were candles enough burnt in one night, to keep an honest poor family for a whole twelvemonth."

As soon as the play, which was *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the Ghost; upon which he asked Jones, "What man that was in the strange dress; something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armour, is it?" Jones answered, "That is the Ghost." To which Partridge replied with a smile, "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one, if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir, ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the Ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick, which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling, that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage? "Oh la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything, for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do no one harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person." "Why, who," cried Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?" "Nay, you may call me a coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Aye, aye: go along with you! Aye, to be sure! Who's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such foolhardiness!—Whatever happens, it is good enough for you.—Follow you? I'd follow the devil as soon. Nay, perhaps it is

the devil—for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases.—Oh! here he is again.—No farther! No, you have gone far enough already; farther than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions." Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried "Hush, hush! dear sir, don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the Ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on the Ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible." "Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it; but to be sure, it is natural to be surprised at such things, though I know there is nothing in them: not that it was the Ghost that surprised me, neither; for I should have known that to have been only a man in a strange dress; but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me." "And dost thou imagine, then, Partridge," cries Jones, "that he was really frightened?" "Nay, sir," said Partridge, "did you not yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case?—But hush! Oh la, what noise is that? There he is again.—Well, to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am not down yonder, where those men are." Then turning his eyes again upon Hamlet, "Aye, you may draw your sword; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil?"

During the second act, Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses; nor could he help observing upon the King's countenance. "Well," said

he, "how people may be deceived by faces? *Nulla fides fronti* is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the King's face, that he had ever committed a murder?" He then inquired after the Ghost; but Jones, who intended he should be surprised, gave him no other satisfaction, than "that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire."

Partridge sat in fearful expectation of this; and now, when the Ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cried out, "There, sir, now; what say you now? is he frightened now or no? As much frightened as you think me, and, to be sure, nobody can help some fears. I would not be in so bad a condition as what's his name, Squire Hamlet, is there, for all the world. Bless me! what's become of the spirit? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth." "Indeed, you saw right," answered Jones. "Well, well," cries Partridge, "I know it is only a play: and besides, if there was anything in all this, Madam Miller would not laugh so; for as to you, sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person.—There, there.—Aye, no wonder you are in such a passion, shake the vile wicked wretch to pieces. If she was my own mother, I should serve her so. To be sure, all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked doings.—Aye, go about your business, I hate the sight of you."

Our critic was now pretty silent till the play, which Hamlet introduces before the King. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him; but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it, than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then turning to Mrs. Miller, he asked her, "If she did not imagine the King looked as if he were touched; though he is," said he, "a good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. . . ."

The grave-digging scenes next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprise at the number of

skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, "That it was one of the most famous burial-places about town." "No wonder, then," cries Partridge, "that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. . . . The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hand. Aye, aye, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe."—Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out, "Well! it is strange to see how fearless some men are; I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man, on any account.—He seemed frightened enough at the Ghost too, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*"

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him, "Which of the players he had liked best?" To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question, "The King, without doubt." "Indeed, Mr. Partridge," says Mrs. Miller, "you are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed, that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player!" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer, "why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the King for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other.—Anybody may see he is an actor. . . ."

Thus ended the adventure at the playhouse; where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones and Mrs.

Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said, than to anything that passed on the stage.

HENRY FIELDING: *Tom Jones*

A Hasty Christening

—AND how does your mistress? cried my father, taking the same step over again from the landing, and calling to Susannah, whom he saw passing by the foot of the stairs with a huge pincushion in her hand—how does your mistress? As well, said Susannah, tripping by, but without looking up, as can be expected.—What a fool am I! said my father, drawing his leg back again—let things be as they will, brother Toby, 'tis ever the precise answer.—And how is the child, pray?—No answer. And where is Dr. Slop? added my father, raising his voice aloud, and looking over the ballusters—Susannah was out of hearing.

Of all the riddles of a married life, said my father, crossing the landing in order to set his back against the wall, whilst he propounded it to my uncle Toby—of all the puzzling riddles, said he, in a marriage state,—of which you may trust me, brother Toby, there are more asses' loads than all Job's stock of asses could have carried—there is not one that has more intricacies in it than this—that from the very moment the mistress of the house is brought to bed, every female in it, from my lady's gentlewoman down to the cinder-wench, becomes an inch taller for it; and give themselves more airs upon that single inch, than all the other inches put together.

I think rather, replied my uncle Toby, that 'tis we who sink an inch lower.—If I meet but a woman with child—I do it.—'Tis a heavy tax upon that half of our fellow-

creatures, brother Shandy, said my uncle Toby.—'Tis a piteous burden upon 'em, continued he, shaking his head.—Yes, yes, 'tis a painful thing—said my father, shaking his head too—but certainly since shaking of heads came into fashion, never did two heads shake together, in concert, from two such different springs.

God bless } , em all { said my uncle Toby and my father,
Deuce take } each to himself.

—Then reach me my breeches off the chair, said my father to Susannah.—There is not a moment's time to dress you, Sir, cried Susannah—the child is as black in the face as my—As your what? said my father, for like all orators, he was a dear searcher into comparisons.—Bless me, Sir, said Susannah, the child's in a fit.—And where's Mr. Yorick?—Never where he should be, said Susannah, but his curate's in the dressing-room, with the child upon his arm, waiting for the name—and my mistress bid me run as fast as I could to know, as Captain Shandy is the godfather, whether it should not be called after him.

Were one sure, said my father to himself, scratching his eye-brow, that the child was expiring, one might as well compliment my brother Toby as not—and it would be a pity, in such a case, to throw away so great a name as Trismegistus upon him—but he may recover.

No, no,—said my father to Susannah, I'll get up.—There's no time, cried Susannah, the child's as black as my shoe. Trismegistus, said my father.—But stay—thou art a leaky vessel, Susannah, added my father; canst thou carry Trismegistus in thy head, the length of the gallery without scattering?—Can I? cried Susannah, shutting the door in a huff.—If she can, I'll be shot, said my father, bouncing out of bed in the dark, and groping for his breeches.

Susannah ran with all speed along the gallery.

My father made all possible speed to find his breeches.

Susannah got the start, and kept it.—'Tis Tris—something, cried Susannah.—There is no christian-name in the world, said the curate, beginning with Tris—but Tristram. Then 'tis Tristram-gistus, quoth Susannah.—There is no gistus to it, noddle!—'tis my own name, replied the curate, dipping his hand, as he spoke, into the bason—Tristram! said he, etc. etc. etc., so Tristram was I called, and Tristram shall I be to the day of my death.

My father followed Susannah, with his night-gown across his arm, with nothing more than his breeches on, fastened through haste with but a single button, and that button through haste thrust only half into the button-hole.

—She has not forgot the name? cried my father, half opening the door.—No, no, said the curate, with a tone of intelligence.—And the child is better, cried Susannah.—And how does your mistress? As well, said Susannah, as can be expected.—Pish! said my father, the button of his breeches slipping out of the button-hole—So that whether the interjection was levelled at Susannah, or the button-hole—whether Pish was an interjection of contempt or an interjection of modesty, is a doubt, and must be a doubt till I shall have time to write the three following favourite chapters, that is, my chapter of chamber-maids, my chapter of pishes, and my chapter of button-holes.

All the light I am able to give the reader at present is this, that the moment my father cried Pish! he whisked himself about—and with his breeches held up by one hand, and his night-gown thrown across the arm of the other, he turned along the gallery to bed, something slower than he came.

LAURENCE STERNE: *Tristram Shandy*

Fashionable Life

AT nine o'clock, in a charming moon-light evening, we embarked at Ranelagh for Vauxhall, in a wherry, so light and slender, that we looked like so many fairies sailing in a nut-shell. My uncle, being apprehensive of catching cold upon the water, went round in the coach, and my aunt would have accompanied him, but he would not suffer me to go by water if she went by land; and therefore she favoured us with her company, as she perceived I had a curiosity to make this agreeable voyage. After all, the vessel was sufficiently loaded; for besides the water-man, there was my brother Jerry, and a friend of his, one Mr. Barton, a country gentleman of a good fortune, who had dined at our house. The pleasure of this little excursion was, however, damped, by my being sadly frightened at our landing; where there was a terrible confusion of wherries, and a crowd of people bawling and swearing, and quarrelling; nay, a parcel of ugly-looking fellows came running into the water, and laid hold on our boat with great violence, to pull it ashore; nor would they quit their hold till my brother struck one of them over the head with his cane. But this flutter was fully recompensed by the pleasures of Vauxhall; which I no sooner entered than I was dazzled and confounded with the variety of beauties that rushed all at once upon my eye. Image to yourself, my dear Letty, a spacious garden, part laid out in delightful walks, bounded with high hedges and trees, and paved with gravel; part exhibiting a wonderful assemblage of the most picturesque and striking objects, pavilions, lodges, groves, grottos, lawns, temples, and cascades; porticoes, colonnades, and rotundos; adorned with pillars, statues, and paintings; the whole illuminated with an infinite number of lamps, disposed in different figures of suns, stars, and

constellations; the place crowded with the gayest company, ranging through those blissful shades, or supping in different lodges on cold collations, enlivened with mirth, freedom, and good humour, and animated by an excellent band of music. Among the vocal performers, I had the happiness to hear the celebrated Mrs. —, whose voice was so loud and so shrill, that it made my head ache through excess of pleasure.

In about half an hour after we arrived we were joined by my uncle, who did not seem to relish the place. People of experience and infirmity, my dear Letty, see with very different eyes from those that such as you and I make use of. Our evening's entertainment was interrupted by an unlucky accident. In one of the remotest walks we were surprised with a sudden shower, that sent the whole company a running, and drove us in heaps, one upon another, into the rotunda; where my uncle, finding himself wet, began to be very peevish and urgent to be gone. My brother went to look for the coach, and found it with much difficulty; but as it could not hold us all, Mr. Barton stayed behind. It was some time before the carriage could be brought up to the gate, in the confusion, notwithstanding the utmost endeavours of our new footman, Humphry Clinker, who lost his scratch periwig, and got a broken head in the scuffle. The moment we were seated, my aunt pulled off my uncle's shoes, and carefully wrapped his poor feet in her capuchin; then she gave him a mouthful of cordial, which she always keeps in her pocket, and his clothes were shifted as soon as we arrived at our lodgings; so that, blessed be God, he escaped a severe cold, of which he was in great terror.

Besides Ranelagh and Vauxhall, I have been at Mrs. Cornley's assembly, which, for the rooms, the company,

the dresses, and decorations, surpasses all description; but as I have no great turn for card-playing, I have not yet entered thoroughly into the spirit of the place: indeed, I am still such a country hoyden, that I could hardly find patience to be put in a condition to appear, yet I was not above six hours under the hands of the hairdresser, who stuffed my head with as much black wool as would have made a quilted petticoat; and, after all, it was the smallest head in the assembly, except my aunt's. She, to be sure, was so particular with her rumped-gown and petticoat, her scanty curls, her lappet-head, deep-triple ruffles, and high stays, that everybody looked at her with surprise: some whispered, and some tittered; and Lady Griskin, by whom we are introduced, flatly told her she was twenty good years behind the fashion.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT: *Humphry Clinker*

Confidence Trick

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself; but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home.

"No, my dear," said she, "our son Moses is a discreet boy and can buy and sell to very good advantage; you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain."

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to entrust him with this commission; and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair; trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins. The business of the toilet

being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the colt with a deal box before him to bring home the groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth called thunder-and-lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black riband. We all followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him, "Good luck! Good luck!" till we could see him no longer.

I changed the subject, by seeming to wonder what could keep our son so long at the fair, as it was now almost night-fall. "Never mind our son," cried my wife; "depend upon it he knows what he is about; I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen on a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. . . . But, as I live, yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back."

As she spoke, Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a pedlar. "Welcome! welcome, Moses! Well my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?"

"I have brought you myself," cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser.

"Ay, Moses," cried my wife, "that we know, but where is the horse?"

"I have sold him," cried Moses, "for three pounds five shillings and twopence." "Well done! my good boy," returned she; "I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it then." "I have brought back no money," cried Moses again, "I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is," pulling out a bundle from his breast; "here they are: a gross of green spectacles, with silver

rims and shagreen cases." "A gross of green spectacles!" repeated my wife in a faint voice. "And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles!" "Dear mother," cried the boy. "Why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money." "A fig for the silver rims!" cried my wife in a passion. "I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce." "You need be under no uneasiness," cried I, "about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence, for I perceive they are only copper varnished over."

"What!" cried my wife, "not silver! the rims not silver!" "No," cried I, "no more silver than your saucepan." "And so," returned she, "we have parted with the colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles, with copper rims and shagreen cases! A murrain take such trumpery! The block-head has been imposed upon, and should have known his company better!" "There, my dear," cried I, "you are wrong; he should not have known them at all." "Marry, hang the idiot!" returned she, "to bring me such stuff; if I had them I would throw them in the fire." "There again you are wrong, my dear," cried I, "for though they be copper, we will keep them by us, as copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing."

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived. He saw now that he had indeed been imposed upon by a prowling sharper, who, observing his figure, had marked him for an easy prey. I therefore asked him the circumstances of his deception. He sold the horse, it seems, and walked the fair in search of another. A reverend-looking man brought him to the tent under pretence of having one to sell. "Here," continued Moses, "we met another man, very well-dressed,

who desired to borrow twenty pounds upon these, saying that he wanted money, and would dispose of them for a third of their value. The first gentleman, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer pass. I sent for Mr. Flamborough, and they talked him up as finely as they did me; and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *The Vicar of Wakefield*

At the Ball

WE passed a most extraordinary evening. A *private* ball this was called, so I expected to have seen about four or five couple; but Lord! my dear Sir, I believe I saw half the world! Two very large rooms were full of company; in one were cards for the elderly ladies and in the other, were the dancers. My mamma Mirvan, for she always calls me her child, said she would sit with Maria and me till we were provided with partners, and then join the card-players.

The gentlemen, as they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands; and they sauntered about, in a careless indolent manner, as if with a view to keep us in suspense. I don't speak of this in regard to Miss Mirvan and myself only, but to the ladies in general; and I thought it so provoking, that I determined in my own mind, that, far from humouring such airs, I would rather not dance at all, than with anyone who should seem to think me ready to accept the first partner who would condescend to take me.

Not long after, a young man, who had for some time looked at us with a kind of negligent impertinence, ad-

vanced, on tiptoe, towards me; he had a set smile on his face, and his dress was so foppish, that I really believe he even wished to be stared at; and yet he was very ugly.

Bowing almost to the ground, with a sort of swing, and waving his hand with the greatest conceit, after a short and silly pause, he said, "Madam—may I presume?"—and stopped, offering to take my hand. I drew it back, but scarce could forbear laughing. "Allow me, Madam" (continued he, affectedly breaking off every half moment), "the honour and happiness—if I am not so unhappy as to address you too late—to have the happiness and honour——"

Again he would have taken my hand, but, bowing my head, I begged to be excused, and turned to Miss Mirvan to conceal my laughter. He then desired to know if I had engaged myself already to some more fortunate man? I said No, and that I believed I should not dance at all. He would keep himself, he told me, disengaged, in hopes I should relent; and then, uttering some ridiculous speeches of sorrow and disappointment, though his face still wore the same invariable smile, he retreated.

It so happened, as we have since recollected, that during this little dialogue, Miss Mirvan was conversing with the lady of the house. And very soon afterwards another gentleman, who seemed about six-and-twenty years old, gaily, but not foppishly dressed, and indeed extremely handsome, with an air of mixed politeness and gallantry, desired to know if I was engaged, or would honour him with my hand. So he was pleased to say, though I am sure I know not what honour he could receive from me; but these sort of expressions, I find, are used as words of course, without any distinctions of persons, or study of propriety.

Well, I bowed, and I am sure I coloured; for indeed I was frightened at the thoughts of dancing before so many people,

all strangers, and, which was worse, with a stranger; however, that was unavoidable, for though I looked round the room several times, I could not see one person that I knew. And so, he took my hand, and led me to join in the dance.

The minuets were over before we arrived, for we were kept late by the milliner's making us wait for our things.

He seemed very desirous of entering into conversation with me; but I was seized with such a panic, that I could hardly speak a word, and nothing but the shame of so soon changing my mind, prevented my returning to my seat, and declining to dance at all.

He appeared to be surprised at my terror, which I believe was but too apparent: however, he asked no questions, though I feared he must think it very strange; for I did not choose to tell him it was owing to my never before dancing but with a schoolgirl.

His conversation was sensible and spirited; his air and address were open and noble; his manners gentle, attentive and infinitely engaging; his person is all elegance, and his countenance the most animated and expressive I have ever seen.

In a short time we were joined by Miss Mirvan, who stood next couple to us. But how was I startled, when she whispered me that my partner was a nobleman! This gave me a new alarm; how will he be provoked, thought I, when he finds what a simple rustic he has honoured with his choice! one whose ignorance of the world makes her perpetually fear doing something wrong!

That he should so much be my superior every way, quite disconcerted me; and you will suppose my spirits were not much raised, when I heard a lady, in passing us, say, "This is the most difficult dance I ever saw."

"O dear, then," cried Maria to her partner, "with your leave, I'll sit down till the next."

"So will I too, then," cried I, "for I am sure I can hardly stand."

"But you must speak to your partner first," answered she; for he had turned aside to talk with some gentlemen. However, I had not sufficient courage to address him, and so away we all three tripped and seated ourselves at another end of the room.

But, unfortunately for me, Miss Mirvan soon after suffered herself to be prevailed upon to attempt the dance; and just as she rose to go, she cried, "My dear, yonder is your partner, Lord Orville, walking about the room in search of you."

"Don't leave me then, dear girl!" cried I; but she was obliged to go. And now I was more uneasy than ever; I would have given the world to have seen Mrs. Mirvan, and begged of her to make my apologies, for what, thought I, can I possibly say to him in excuse for running away? he must either conclude me a fool, or half mad; for any one brought up in the great world, and accustomed to its ways, can have no idea of such sort of fears as mine.

My confusion increased when I observed he was everywhere seeking me, with apparent perplexity and surprise; but when, at last, I saw him move towards the place where I sat, I was ready to sink with shame and distress. I found it absolutely impossible to keep my seat because I could not think of a word to say for myself, and so I rose, and walked hastily towards the card-room, resolving to stay with Mrs. Mirvan the rest of the evening, and not dance at all. But before I could find her, Lord Orville saw and approached me.

He begged to know if I was not well? You may easily imagine how much I was embarrassed. I made no answer, but hung my head like a fool, and looked on my fan.

He then, with an air the most respectfully serious, asked if he had been so unhappy as to offend me.

"No, indeed!" cried I: and, in hopes of changing the discourse, and preventing his further inquiries, I desired to know if he had seen the young lady who had been conversing with me.

No; but would I honour him with any commands to her?

"O by no means!"

Was there any other person with whom I wished to speak?

I said *no*, before I knew I had answered at all.

Should he have the pleasure of bringing me any refreshment?

I bowed, almost involuntarily. And away he flew.

I was quite ashamed of being so troublesome, and so much *above* myself as these seeming airs made me appear; but indeed I was too much confused to think or act with any consistency.

If he had not been as swift as lightning, I don't know whether I should not have stolen away again; but he returned in a moment. When I had drunk a glass of lemonade, he hoped, he said, that I would again honour him with my hand, as a new dance was just begun. I had not the presence of mind to say a single word, and so I let him once more lead me to the place I had left.

FANNY BURNEY: *Evelina*

Family Finances

MRS. JOHN DASHWOOD now installed herself mistress of Norland; and her mother and sisters-in-law were degraded to the condition of visitors. As such, however, they were treated by her with quiet civility; and by her husband with

as much kindness as he could feel towards anybody beyond himself, his wife and their child. He really pressed them, with some earnestness, to consider Norland as their home; and as no plan appeared so eligible to Mrs. Dashwood as remaining there till she could accommodate herself with a house in the neighbourhood, his invitation was accepted. . . .

Mrs. John Dashwood did not at all approve of what her husband intended to do for his sisters. To take three thousand pounds from the fortune of their dear little boy would be impoverishing him to the most dreadful degree. She begged him to think again on the subject. How could he answer it to himself to rob his child, and his only child too, of so large a sum? And what possible claim could the Miss Dashwoods, who were related to him only by half blood, which she considered as no relationship at all, have on his generosity to so large an amount? It was very well known that no affection was ever supposed to exist between the children of any man by different marriages; and why was he going to ruin himself, and their poor little Harry, by giving away all his money to his half-sisters?

"It was my father's last request to me," replied her husband, "that I should assist his widow and daughters."

"He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten to one but he was lightheaded at the time. Had he been in his right senses he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child."

"He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my dear Fanny; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly have supposed I should neglect them. But as he required the promise

I could not do less than give it: at least I thought so at the time. The promise, therefore, was given, and must be performed. Something must be done for them whenever they leave Norland and settle in a new home."

"Well, then, *let* something be done for them; but *that* something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider," she added, "that when the money is once parted with it never can return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever. If, indeed, it could ever be restored to our poor little boy. . . ."

"Why, to be sure," said her husband very gravely, "that would make a great difference. The time may come when Harry will regret that so large a sum was parted with. If he should have a numerous family, for instance, it would be a very convenient addition."

"To be sure it would."

"Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties if the sum were diminished one half. Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes."

"Oh, beyond anything great! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if *really* his sisters! And as it is—only half blood!—But you have such a generous spirit!"

"I would not wish to do anything mean," he replied. "One had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little. No one, at least, can think I have not done enough for them: even themselves, they can hardly expect more."

"There is no knowing what *they* may expect," said the lady. "But we are not to think of their expectations: the question is, what you can afford to do."

"Certainly, and I think I may afford to give them five hundred pounds apiece. As it is, without any addition of mine, they will each have above three thousand pounds on

their mother's death: a very comfortable fortune for any young woman."

"To be sure it is: and it strikes me that they can want no addition at all. They will have ten thousand pounds divided amongst them. If they marry, they will be sure of doing well: and if they do not, they may all live very comfortably together on the interest of ten thousand pounds."

"That is very true, and, therefore, I do not know whether, upon the whole, it would not be more advisable to do something for their mother while she lives rather than for them; something of the annuity kind, I mean. My sisters would feel the good effects of it as well as herself. A hundred a year would make them all perfectly comfortable."

His wife hesitated a little, however, in giving her consent to this plan.

"To be sure," said she, "it is better than parting with fifteen hundred pounds at once. But then, if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years, we shall be completely taken in."

"Fifteen years! my dear Fanny; her life cannot be worth half that purchase."

"Certainly not; but if you observe, people always live for ever when there is any annuity to be paid them; and she is very stout and healthy, and hardly forty. An annuity is a very serious business; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. You are not aware of what you are doing. I have known a great deal of the trouble of annuities; for my mother was clogged with the payment of three to old superannuated servants by my father's will, and it is amazing how disagreeable she found it. Twice every year these annuities were to be paid; and then there was the trouble of getting it to them; and then one of them was said to have died, and afterwards it turned out to be no such thing. My mother was quite sick of it. Her income was not

her own, she said, with such perpetual claims on it; and it was the more unkind in my father, because otherwise, the money would have been entirely at my mother's disposal, without any restriction whatever. It has given me such an abhorrence of annuities, that I am sure I would not pin myself down to the payment of one for all the world."

"It is certainly an unpleasant thing," replied Mr. Dashwood, "to have those kind of yearly drains on one's income. One's fortune, as your mother justly says, is *not* one's own. To be tied down to the regular payment of such a sum, on every rent day, is by no means desirable: it takes away one's independence."

"Undoubtedly: and after all, you have no thanks for it. They think themselves secure, you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all. If I were you, whatever I did should be done at my own discretion entirely. I would not bind myself to allow them anything yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years to spare a hundred, or even fifty pounds, from our own expenses."

"I believe you are right, my love; it will be better that there should be no annuity in the case; whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance, because they would only enlarge their style of living if they felt sure of a larger income, and would not be sixpence the richer for it at the end of the year. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds, now and then, will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father."

"To be sure it will. Indeed to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your giving them any money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you;

for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish, game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I'll lay my life that he meant nothing further; indeed it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your mother-in-law and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year apiece, and, of course, they will pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether, they will have five hundred a year amongst them, and what on earth can four women want for more than that? They will live so cheap! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind! Only conceive how comfortable they will be! Five hundred a year! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it; and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to give *you* something."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Dashwood, "I believe you are perfectly right. My father could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by such acts of assistance and kindness to them as you have described. When my mother removes into another house my services shall be readily given to accommodate her as far as I can. Some little present of furniture, too, may be acceptable then."

"Certainly," returned Mrs. John Dashwood. "But, however, *one* thing must be considered. When your father and mother moved to Norland, though the furniture of Stanhill was sold, all the china, plate, and linen was saved, and is now

left to your mother. Her house will therefore be almost completely fitted up as soon as she takes it."

"That is a material consideration, undoubtedly. A valuable legacy indeed! And yet some of the plate would have been a very pleasant addition to our stock here."

"Yes; and the set of breakfast china is twice as handsome as what belongs to this house. A great deal too handsome, in my opinion, for any place *they* can ever afford to live in. But, however, so it is. Your father thought only of *them*. And I must say this: that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes, for we very well knew that if he could, he would have left almost everything in the world to *them*."

This argument was irresistible. It gave to his intentions whatever of decision was wanting before; and he finally resolved, that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father than such kind of neighbourly acts as his own wife pointed out.

JANE AUSTEN: *Sense and Sensibility*

In the Garden

"I PERCEIVE," said Mr. Milestone, after they had walked a few paces, "these grounds have never been touched by the finger of taste."

"The place is quite a wilderness," said Squire Headlong: "for, during the latter part of my father's life, while I was *finishing* my *education*, he troubled himself about nothing but the cellar, and suffered everything else to go to rack and ruin. A mere wilderness, as you see, even now in December; but

in summer a complete nursery of briars, a forest of thistles, a plantation of nettles, without any live stock but goats, that have eaten up all the bark of the trees. Here you see is the pedestal of a statue, with only half a leg and four toes remaining: there were many here once. When I was a boy, I used to sit every day on the shoulders of Hercules: what became of him I have never been able to ascertain. Neptune has been lying these seven years in the dust-hole; Atlas had his head knocked off to fit him for propping a shed; and only the day before yesterday we fished Bacchus out of the horse-pond."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Milestone, "accord me your permission to wave the wand of enchantment over your grounds. The rocks shall be blown up, the trees shall be cut down, the wilderness and all its goats shall vanish like mist. Pagodas and Chinese bridges, gravel walks and shrubberies, bowling greens, canals, and clumps of larch shall rise upon its ruins. One age, sir, had brought to light the treasures of ancient learning; a second has penetrated into the depths of metaphysics; a third has brought to perfection the science of astronomy; but it was reserved for the exclusive genius of the present times to invent the noble art of picturesque gardening, which has given, as it were, a new tint to the complexion of nature, and a new outline to the physiognomy of the universe."

"Give me leave," said Sir Patrick O'Prism, "to take an exception to that same. Your system of levelling, and trimming, and clipping, and docking, and clumping and polishing, and cropping, and shaving, destroys all the beautiful intricacies of natural luxuriance, and all the graduated harmonies of light and shade, melting into one another, as you see them on that rock over yonder. I never saw one of your improved places, as you call them, and which are nothing

but big bowling greens, like sheets of green paper, with a parcel of round clumps scattered over them, like so many spots of ink, flicked at random out of a pen, and a solitary animal here and there looking as if it were lost, that I did not think it was for all the world like Hounslow Heath, thinly sprinkled over with bushes and highwaymen."

"Sir," said Mr. Milestone, "you will have the goodness to make a distinction between the picturesque and the beautiful."

"Will I?" said Sir Patrick. "Och! but I won't. For what is beautiful? That what pleases the eye. And what pleases the eye? Tints variously broken and blended. Now tints variously broken and blended constitute the picturesque."

"Allow me," said Mr. Gall. "I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call *unexpectedness*."

"Pray, sir," said Mr. Milestone, "by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for a second time?"

Mr. Gall bit his lips, and inwardly vowed to revenge himself on Milestone, by cutting up his next publication.

A long controversy now ensued concerning the picturesque and the beautiful, highly edifying to Squire Headlong.

The three philosophers stopped, as they wound round a projecting point of rock, to contemplate a little boat which was gliding over the tranquil surface of the lake below.

"The blessings of civilisation," said Mr. Foster, "extend themselves to the meanest individuals of the community. That boatman, singing as he sails along, is, I have no doubt, a very happy, and, comparatively to the men of his class some centuries ago, a very enlightened and intelligent man."

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK: *Headlong Hall*

A Clergyman

ANOTHER and very frequent visitor was the Reverend Mr. Larynx, the vicar of Claydyke, a village about ten miles distant;—a good-natured accommodating divine, who was always most obligingly ready to take a dinner and a bed at the house of any country gentleman in distress for a companion. Nothing amiss came to him,—a game at billiards, at chess, at draughts, at backgammon, at piquet, or at all-fours in a *tête-à-tête*,—or any game on the cards, round, square, or triangular, in a party of any number exceeding two. He would even dance among friends, rather than that a lady, even if she were on the wrong side of thirty, should sit still for want of a partner. For a ride, a walk, or a sail, in the morning,—a song after dinner, a ghost story after supper,—a bottle of port with the squire, or a cup of green tea with his lady,—for all or any of these, or for anything else that was agreeable to any one else, consistently with the dye of his coat, the Reverend Mr. Larynx was at all times equally ready. When at Nightmare Abbey, he would condole with Mr. Glowry,—drink Madeira with Scythrop,—crack jokes with Mr. Hilary,—hand Mrs. Hilary to the piano, take charge of her fan and gloves, and turn over her music with surprising dexterity,—quote Revelations with Mr. Toobad,—and lament the good old times of feudal darkness with the transcendental Mr. Flosky.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK: *Nightmare Abbey*

Married Women

“MRS. DOUGLAS,” said Lady Portsmore, “I am going to take quite the privilege of an old friend with you, but I feel as if

I had known you all my life, and I am going to say something very impertinent."

Mrs. Douglas nodded. It was apparently a nod of acquiescence in the latter proposition.

"That dear little Eliza of yours, I am charmed with her; I am indeed. I would not say so if I were not; but if you will take my advice, you will not allow Colonel Beaufort to be so much with her."

"I think it would be difficult to prevent it," said Mrs. Douglas, with an affectation of carelessness. "Colonel Beaufort seems to me like most men, very much in the habit of taking his own way."

"Yes, but, my dear Mrs. Douglas, I am so afraid your gay, innocent Eliza, who is not aware how encouraging her frank manner is, should fancy that Ernest's attentions mean more than they do; I know him so thoroughly. He is a dear kind-hearted creature, but rather a dangerous man. He means nothing by it, but he always seems as if he were making love to every woman he speaks to."

"That may be rather tiresome, and is very wrong," said Mrs. Douglas. "But it cannot be very dangerous. Those *seeming* lovers never take anybody in."

"Eliza is so young," continued Lady Portmore, who was longing to bring the conversation round to herself, "and very little attention turns those young heads; and what made me wish to put you on your guard, Mrs. Douglas, is that I know—this is, of course, entirely between ourselves, but I happen to know that Ernest is much attached to another person, quite a hopeless attachment, but so it is; he is very much in love with—a married woman."

"More shame for her. It is a pity she does not see him now," answered Mrs. Douglas, still preserving her coldness; "she would be thoroughly mortified, and it would do her a

great deal of good. I have no patience with married women and their lovers."

"Oh! but you mistake me, dear Mrs. Douglas; I would not have you suppose for an instant, that because Ernest is in love with—, this person we are alluding to, she has ever thought of giving him the slightest encouragement."

"But it is what I do suppose, and always shall believe. I am not speaking of Colonel Beaufort individually. I never met him before, and shall not very much care if I never meet him again; but I shall always suppose that when a man makes love to a married woman it is entirely her fault, and it gives me the worst possible opinion of her."

"My dear Mrs. Douglas," said Lady Portmore, growing quite warm in the argument, "I do think you are a little too severe. I am sure I know some instances of married women, who are quite surrounded by admirers, who have yet conducted themselves in the most wonderful manner."

"I dare say they have," said Mrs. Douglas significantly. "I know several instances myself, and very wonderful women they are. I cannot bear them."

"Ay! but I mean in the most exemplary manner. Now, Mrs. Douglas, only last year I knew a person, a married woman, very much admired," sinking her voice modestly, "who had reason to know that a man she met constantly in society was very much in love with her. He was in her opera-box every evening, met her at every party she went to, and passed half his mornings at her house. She saw the folly of this, knew she was in danger of being talked of, and without the least hesitation, without a thought of the inconvenience and the trouble, she set off to Cornwall, and passed a whole week there with the most tiresome old aunt in the world. This at once proved to the man he had no chance, and he withdrew immediately, and affected a

passion for someone else. Now, what do you think of that?"

"Why, that there never was anything half so absurd. If your friend had given up her opera-box, sent excuses to her balls and said 'Not at Home' for a week, the gentleman's passion would soon have come to an end. . . . That grand action of a sudden rush to Cornwall must have flattered him amazingly; it showed she was obliged to go to the Land's End for safety. No, whenever I hear any of that cant about the difficult position of a married woman with her lovers, I know exactly what to think of her; I think her a good-for-nothing woman."

EMILY EDEN: *The Semi-attached Couple*

The Table

THE room was a blaze of light. Countless compos swealed and simmered in massive gilt candelabras, while ground lamps of various forms lighted up the salmon-coloured walls, brightening up the countenances of many ancestors, and exposing the dullness of the ill-cleaned plate.

The party having got shuffled into their places, the Rev. Jacob Jones said an elaborate grace, during which the company stood. . . .

There were two soups—at least two plated tureens, one containing pea-soup, the other mutton-broth. Mr. Jorrock said he didn't like the latter, it always reminded him of "a cold in the 'ead." The pea-soup he thought werry like 'oss-gruel;—that he kept to himself.

"Sherry or My-dearer?" inquired the stiff-necked boy,

going round with a decanter in each hand, upsetting the soup-spoons, and dribbling the wine over people's hands.

While these were going round, the coachman and Mr. De Green's boy entered with two dishes of fish. On removing the large plated covers, six pieces of skate and a large haddock made their appearance. Mr. Jorrocks's countenance fell five-and-twenty per cent., as he would say. He very soon despatched one of the six pieces of skate, and was just done in time to come in for the tail of the haddock.

"The Duke 'ill come in badly for fish, I'm thinkin'," said Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing the empty dishes as they were taken off.

"Oh, Marmaduke don't eat fish," replied Mrs. M.

"Oh, I doesn't mean your Duke, but the Duke o' Rutland," rejoined Mr. Jorrocks.

Mrs. Muleygrubs didn't take.

"Nothing left for *Manners*, I mean, mum," explained Mr. Jorrocks, pointing to the empty dish.

Mrs. Muleygrubs smiled, because she thought she ought, though she did not know why.

"Sherry or My-dearer, sir?" inquired the stiff-necked boy, going his round as before.

Mr. Jorrocks asked Mrs. Muleygrubs to take wine, and having satisfied himself that the sherry was bad, he took My-dearer, which was worse.

"Bad ticket, I fear," observed Mr. Jorrocks aloud to himself, smacking his lips. "Have ye any swipes?"

"Sober-water and Seltzer-water," replied the boy.

"'Ang your sober-water!" growled Mr. Jorrocks.

"Are you a hard rider, Mr. Jorrocks?" now asked his hostess, still thinking anxiously of her dinner.

"'Ardest in England, mum," replied our friend, confidently,

muttering aloud to himself, "may say that, for I never goes off the 'ard road if I can 'clp it."

After a long pause during which the conversation gradually died out, a kick was heard at the door, which the stiff-necked foot-boy having replied to by opening, the other boy appeared, bearing a tray, followed by all the other flunkeys, each carrying a silver-covered dish.

"Come, *that's* more like the thing," said Mr. Jorrocks to himself, eyeing the procession.

A large dish was placed under the host's nose, another under that of Mrs. Muleygrubs.

"Roast beef and boiled turkey?" said Mr. Jorrocks to himself, half inclined to have a mental bet on the subject. "May be saddle o' mutton and chickens," continued he, pursuing the speculation. . . .

Stiffneck then proceeded to uncover, followed by his comrade. He began at his master, and giving the steam-begrimed cover a flourish in the air, favoured his master's bald head with a hot shower-bath. Under pretence of admiring the pattern, Mr. Jorrocks had taken a peep under the side-dish before him, and seeing boiled turnips, had settled that there was a round of beef at the bottom of the table. Spare ribs presented themselves to view. Mrs. Muleygrubs's dish held a degenerate turkey, so lean and so lank that it looked as if it had been starved instead of fed. There was a rein-deer tongue under one centre dish, and sausages under the other. Minced veal, forbidding-looking *risssoles*, stewed celery, and pigs' feet occupied the corner dishes.

"God bless us! what a dinner!" ejaculated Mr. Jorrocks, involuntarily.

"Game and black-puddings coming, isn't there, my dear?" inquired Mr. Muleygrubs of his wife.

"Yes, my dear," responded his obedient half.

"Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, base, and unnatural,"

muttered Mr. Jorrocks, running his fork through the breast of the unhappy turkey. "Shall I give you a little *ding dong*?"

"It's turkey," observed the lady.

"True!" replied Mr. Jorrocks; "*ding dong's* French for Turkey."

"Are yours good hounds, Mr. Jorrocks?" now asked the lady, thinking how awkwardly he was carving.

"*Best goin',* mum!" replied our friend. "*Best goin',* mum. The Belvoir may be 'andsomer, and the Quorn patienter under pressure, but for real tear'im-and-heat-'im qualities, there are none to compare with mine. They're the buoys for making the foxes cry Capevi!" added our friend, with a broad grin of delight on his ruddy face.

"Indeed," mused the anxious lady to whom our friend's comparisons were all gibberish.

"Shall I give anybody any turkey?" asked he, holding nearly half of it up on the fork, preparatory to putting it on his own plate. Nobody claimed it, so our friend appropriated it. . . .

The turkey being only very so-so, and the rein-deer tongue rather worse, Mr. Jorrocks did not feel disposed to renew his acquaintance with either, and placing his knife and fork resignedly on his plate, determined to take his chance of the future. He remembered that in France the substantials sometimes did not come till late on.

Stiffneck, seeing his idleness, was presently at him with the dish of mince.

Mr. Jorrocks eyed it suspiciously, and then stirred the

sliced lemon and meat about with the spoon. He thought at first of taking some, then he thought he wouldn't, then he fixed he wouldn't.

"No," said he, "no," motioning it away with his hand, "no, I likes to chew my own meat."

The *rissôles* were then candidates for his custom.

"Large marbles," observed Mr. Jorrock's aloud to himself—"large marbles," repeated he, as he at length succeeded in penetrating the hide of one of them with a spoon. "Might as well eat lead," observed he aloud, sending them away too.

"I often thinks now," observed he, turning to his hostess, "that it would be a good thing, mum, if folks would 'gree to give up these stupid make-believe side-dishes, mum, for nobody ever eats them, at least if they do they're sure to come off second best, for no cuk that ever was foaled can do justice to sich a variety of wittles."

"O! but, Mr. Jorrock's, how could you send up a dinner properly without them?" exclaimed the lady with mingled horror and astonishment.

"Properly without them, mum," repeated our master, coolly and deliberately; "properly without them, mum,—why, that's jest wot I was meanin'," continued he. "You see your cuk 'as such a multitude o' things to do, that it's hutterly impossible for her to send them all in properly, so 'stead o' gettin' a few things well done, ye get a great many only badly done. . . ."

While this unpalatable conversation—unpalatable, at least, to our hostess—was going on, the first course was being removed, and a large, richly-ornamented game-pie made its appearance, which was placed before Mr. Muleygrubs.

"Large tart!" observed Mr. Jorrock's, eyeing it, thinking if he could help himself he might yet manage to make up his

lee-way: "thought there were dark puddings comin'," observed he to his hostess.

"Game and black puddings," replied Mrs. Muleygrubs. "This comes between courses always."

"Never saw it afore," observed Mr. Jorrocks.

Mr. Marmaduke helped the pie very sparingly, just as he had seen the butler at Onger Castle helping a *pâté de foie gras*; and putting as much on to a plate as would make about a mouthful and a half to each person, he sent Stiffneck round with a fork to let people help themselves. Fortunately for Mr. Jorrocks, neither Mr. nor Miss De Green, nor Miss Slowan nor Mr. Muleygrubs took any, and the untouched plate coming to him, he very coolly seized the whole, while the foot-boy returned to the dismayed Mr. Muleygrubs for more. Putting a few more scraps on a plate, Mr. Muleygrubs sent off the pie, lest anyone should make a second attack.

By dint of playing a good knife and fork, our friend cleared his plate just as the second course made its appearance. This consisted of a brace of black partridges guarding a diminutive snipe at the top, and three links of black pudding at the bottom—stewed celery, potato chips, puffs and tartlets forming the side-dishes.

"*Humph!*" grunted our friend, eyeing each dish as it was uncovered. "*Humph!*" repeated he—"not much there—three shillin's for the top dish, one for the bottom, and eighteen pence say for the four sides—five and six altogether—think I could do it for five. Howsomever, never mind," continued he, drawing the dish of game towards him. "Anyone for any *gibier*, as we say in France?" asked he, driving his fork into the breast of the plumpest of the partridges. Nobody closed with the offer.

"Pr'aps if you'd help it, and let it be handed round, some one will take some," suggested Mr. Muleygrubs.

"Well," said Mr. Jorrocks, "I've no objection—none wot-ever—only while these clumsy chaps o' yours are runnin' agin each other with it, the wittles are coolin'—that's all," said our master, placing half a partridge on a plate, and delivering it up to go on its travels. Thinking it cut well, Mr. Jorrocks placed the other half on his own plate, and taking a comprehensive sweep of the crumbs and bread sauce, proceeded to make sure of the share by eating a mouthful of it. He need not have been alarmed, for no one came for any, and he munched and crunched his portion in peace. He then ate the snipe almost at a bite.

"What will you take next, Mr. Jorrocks?" asked his hostess, disgusted at his rapacity.

"Thank 'ee, mum, thank 'ee," replied he, munching and clearing his mouth; "thank 'ee, mum," added he, "I'll take breath if you please, mum," added he, throwing himself back in his chair.

R. S. SURTEES: *Handley Cross*

An Introduction

AT Lord Latimer's house were assembled some hundreds of those persons who are rarely found together in London society: for business, politics, and literature draught off the most eminent men, and usually leave to houses that receive the world little better than indolent rank or ostentatious wealth. Even the young men of pleasure turn up their noses at parties nowadays, and find society a bore. But there are some dozen or two of houses, the owners of which are both apart from and above the fashion, in which a foreigner may see, collected under the same roof, many of the most re-

markable men of busy, thoughtful, majestic England. Lord Latimer himself had been a cabinet minister. He retired from public on pretence of ill-health; but, in reality, because its anxious bustle was not congenial to a gentle and accomplished, but somewhat feeble, mind. With a high reputation and an excellent cook, he enjoyed a great popularity, both with his own party and the world in general; and he was the centre of a small, but distinguished circle of acquaintance, who drank Latimer's wine, and quoted Latimer's sayings, and liked Latimer much better, because, not being author or minister, he was not in their way.

Lord Latimer received Maltravers with marked courtesy, and even deference, and invited him to join his own whist-table, which was one of the highest compliments his lordship could pay to his intellect. But when his guest refused the proffered honour, the earl turned him over to the countess, as having become the property of the womankind; and was soon immersed in his aspirations for the odd trick.

While Maltravers was conversing with Lady Latimer, he happened to raise his eyes, and saw opposite to him a young lady of such remarkable beauty, that he could scarcely refrain from an admiring exclamation.—“And who,” he asked, recovering himself, “is that lady? It is strange that even I, who go so little into the world, should be compelled to inquire the name of one whose beauty must already have made her celebrated.”

“Oh, Lady Florence Lascelles—she came out last year. She is, indeed, most brilliant, yet more so in mind and accomplishments than face. I must be allowed to introduce you.”

At this offer, a strange shyness, and as it were reluctant distrust, seized Maltravers—a kind of presentiment of danger and evil. He drew back, and would have made some excuse,

but Lady Latimer did not heed his embarrassment, and was already by the side of Lady Florence Lascelles. A moment more, and beckoning to Maltravers, the countess presented him to the lady. As he bowed and seated himself beside his new acquaintance, he could not but observe that her cheeks were suffused with the most lively blushes, and that she received him with a confusion not common even in ladies just brought out, and just introduced to "a lion." He was rather puzzled than flattered by these tokens of an embarrassment somewhat akin to his own; and the first few sentences of their conversation passed off with a certain awkwardness and reserve. At this moment, to the surprise, perhaps to the relief, of Ernest, they were joined by Lumley Ferrers.

"Ah, Lady Florence, I kiss your hands—I am charmed to find you acquainted with my friend Maltravers."

"And Mr. Ferrers, what makes him so late to-night?" asked the fair Florence, with a sudden ease which rather startled Maltravers.

"A dull dinner, *voilà tout!*—I have no other excuse." And Ferrers, sliding into a vacant chair on the other side of Lady Florence, conversed volubly and unceasingly, as if seeking to monopolise her attention.

Ernest had not been so much captivated with the manner of Florence as he had been struck with her beauty, and now, seeing her apparently engaged with another, he rose and quietly moved away. He was soon one of a knot of men who were conversing on the absorbing topics of the day; and as by degrees the exciting subject brought out his natural eloquence and masculine sense, the talkers became listeners, the knot widened into a circle, and he himself was unconsciously the object of general attention and respect.

"And what think you of Mr. Maltravers?" asked Ferrers, carelessly; "does he keep up your expectations?"

Lady Florence had sunk into a reverie, and Ferrers repeated his question.

"He is younger than I had imagined him,—and—and——"

"Handsome, I suppose you mean."

"No! calmer and less animated."

"He seems animated enough now," said Ferrers; "but your ladylike conversation failed in striking the Promethean spark. 'Lay that flattering unction to your soul.'"

"Ah, you are right—he must have thought me very——"

"Beautiful, no doubt."

"Beautiful!—I hate the word, Lumley. I wish I were not handsome—I might then get some credit for my intellect."

"Humph!" said Ferrers, significantly.

"Oh, you don't think so, sceptic," said Florence, shaking her head with a slight laugh, and an altered manner.

"Does it matter what I think," said Ferrers, with an attempted touch at the sentimental, "when Lord This and Lord That, and Mr. So-and-so, and Count What-d'ye-call-him, are all making their way to you, to dispossess me of my envied monopoly?"

While Ferrers spoke, several of the scattered loungers grouped around Florence, and the conversation, of which she was the cynosure, became animated and gay. Oh, how brilliant she was, that peerless Florence—with what petulant and sparkling grace came wit and wisdom, and even genius, from those ruby lips. . . . Educated even to learning—courageous even to a want of feminacy—she delighted to sport with ignorance and pretension, even in the highest places; and the laugh she excited was like lightning,—no one could divine where next it might fall.

But Florence, though dreaded and unloved, was yet courted, flattered, and the rage. For this there were two reasons; first, she was a coquette, and secondly, she was an heiress.

Thus the talkers in the room were divided into two principal groups, over one of which Maltravers may be said to have presided; over the other, Florence.

BULWER LYTTON: *Ernest Maltravers*

A Homecoming

MURIEL TOWERS crowned a wooded steep, part of a wild and winding and sylvan valley at the bottom of which rushed a foaming stream. On the other side of the castle the scenc, though extensive, was not less striking, and was essentially romantic. A vast park spread in all directions beyond the limit of the eye, and with much variety of character, ornate near the mansion, and choicely timbered; in other parts glens and spreading dells, masses of black pines and savage woods; everywhere, sometimes glittering and sometimes sullen, glimpses of the largest natural lake that inland England boasts, MURIEL MERE, and in extreme distance moors, and the first crest of mountains. The park, too, was full of life, for there were not only herds of red and fallow deer, but, in its more secret haunts, wandered a race of wild cattle, extremely savage, white and dove-coloured, and said to be of the time of the Romans.

It was not without emotion that Lothair beheld the chief seat of his race. It was not the first time he had visited it. He had a clear and painful recollection of a brief, hurried, unkind glimpse caught of it in his very earliest boyhood. His uncle had taken him there by some inconvenient cross-railroad, to avail themselves of which they had risen in the dark on a March morning, and in an East wind. When they arrived at their station they had hired an open fly drawn by

a single horse, and when they had at last reached the uninhabited Towers, they entered by the offices, where Lothair was placed in the steward's room, by a smoky fire, given something to eat, and told that he might walk about and amuse himself, provided he did not go out of sight of the castle, while his uncle and the steward mounted their horses and rode over the estate; leaving Lothair for hours without companions, and returning just in time in a shivering twilight, to clutch him up, as it were, by the nape of the neck, twist him back again into the one-horse fly, and regain the railroad; his uncle praising himself the whole time for the satisfactory and business-like manner in which he had planned and completed the expedition.

What a contrast to present circumstances! Although Lothair had wished, and thought he had secured, that his arrival at Muriel should be quite private and even unknown, and that all ceremonies and celebrations should be postponed for a few days, during which he hoped to become a little more familiar with his home, the secret could not be kept, and the county would not tolerate this reserve. He was met at the station by five hundred horsemen all well mounted, and some of them gentlemen of high degree, who insisted on accompanying him to his gates. His carriage passed under triumphal arches, and choirs of enthusiastic children, waving parochial banners, hymned his auspicious approach.

At the park gates his cavalcade quitted him with that delicacy of feeling which always distinguishes Englishmen, however rough their habit. As their attendance was self-invited, they would not intrude upon his home.

"Your Lordship will have enough to do to-day without being troubled with us," said their leader as he shook hands with Lothair.

But Lothair would not part with them thus. With the in-

spiring recollection of his speech at the Fenian meeting, Lothair was not afraid of rising in his barouche and addressing them. What he said was said very well, and it was addressed to a people who, though the shyest in the world, have a passion for public speaking, than which no achievement more tests reserve. It was something to be a great peer and a great proprietor, and to be young and singularly well-favoured; but to be able to make a speech, and such a good one, such cordial words in so strong and musical a voice; all felt at once they were in the presence of the natural leader of the county. The enthusiasm of the hunting field burst forth. They gave him three ringing cheers, and jostled their horses forward that they might grasp his hand.

The park gates were open, and the postillions dashed along through scenes of loveliness on which Lothair would fain have lingered, but he consoled himself with the recollection that he should probably have an opportunity of seeing them again. Sometimes his carriage seemed in the heart of an ancient forest; sometimes the deer, startled at his approach, were scudding over expanding lawns; then his course wound by the margin of a sinuous lake with green islands and golden gondolas, and then, after advancing through stately avenues, he arrived at mighty gates of wondrous workmanship, that once had been the boast of a celebrated convent on the Danube, but which, in the days of revolutions, had reached England, and had been obtained by the grandfather of Lothair to guard the choice demesne that was the vicinage of his castle.

When we remember that Lothair, notwithstanding his rank and vast wealth, had never, from the nature of things, been the master of an establishment, it must be admitted that the present occasion was a little trying for his nerves. The whole household of the Towers were arrayed and arranged

in groups on the steps of the chief entrance. The steward of the estate, who had been one of the cavalcade, had galloped on before, and he was of course the leading spirit, and extended his arm to his Lord as Lothair descended from his carriage. The house steward, the chief butler, the head gardener, the chief of the kitchen, the head keeper, the head forester, and grooms of the stud and of the chambers, formed one group behind the housekeeper, a grave and distinguished-looking female, who curtsied like the old court; half a dozen powdered gentlemen, glowing in crimson liveries, indicated the presence of my Lord's footmen, while the rest of the household, considerable in numbers, were arranged in groups according to their sex, and at a respectful distance.

What struck Lothair (who was always thinking, and had no inconsiderable fund of humour in his sweet and innocent nature) was the wonderful circumstance that, after so long an interval of neglect and abeyance, he should find himself the master of so complete and consummate a household.

"Castles and parks," he thought, "I had a right to count on, and, perhaps, even pictures, but how came I to possess such a work of art as my groom of the chambers, who seems as respectfully haughty and as calmly graceful as if he were at Brentham itself, and whose coat must have been made in Savile Row, quite bewilders me. . . ." Passing through the entrance hall, a lofty chamber though otherwise of moderate dimensions, Lothair was ushered into his armoury, a gallery two hundred feet long, with suits of complete mail ranged on each side, and the walls otherwise covered with rare and curious weapons. It was impossible, even for the master of this collection, to suppress the delight and the surprise with which he beheld the scene. We must remember, in his excuse, that he beheld it for the first time.

The armoury led to a large and lofty octagonal chamber,

highly decorated, in the centre of which was the tomb of Lothair's grandfather. He had raised it in his lifetime. The tomb was of alabaster surrounded by a railing of pure gold, and crowned with a recumbent figure of the deceased in his coronet; a fanciful man, who lived in solitude, building castles and making gardens.

What charmed Lothair most as he proceeded were the number of courts and quadrangles in the castle, all of bright and fantastic architecture, and each of which was a garden, glowing with brilliant colours, and gay with the voice of fountains or the forms of gorgeous birds. Our young friend did not soon weary in his progress; even the suggestions of the steward, that his lordship's luncheon was at command, did not restrain him. Ballrooms, and baronial halls, and long libraries with curiously stained windows, and suites of dazzling saloons where he beheld the original portraits of his parents of which he had miniatures; he saw them all, and was pleased and interested.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI: *Lothair*

A Banknote

WE began to talk of Miss Matty's new silk gown. I discovered that it would be really the first time in her life that she had had to choose anything of consequence for herself: for Miss Jenkyns had always been the more decided character, whatever her taste might have been; and it is astonishing how such people carry this world before them by the mere force of will. Miss Matty anticipated the sight of the glossy folds with as much delight as if the five sovereigns, set apart for the purchase, could buy all the silks in the shop;

and (remembering my own loss of two hours in a toy-shop before I could tell on what wonder to spend a silver three-pence) I was very glad that we were going early, that dear Miss Matty might have leisure for the delights of perplexity.

If a happy sea-green could be met with, the gown was to be sea-green: if not, she inclined to maize, and I to silver grey; and we discussed the requisite number of breadths until we arrived at the shop-door. We were to buy the tea, select the silk, and then clamber up the iron corkscrew stairs that led into what was once a loft, though now a fashion show-room.

The young men at Mr. Johnson's had on their best looks, and their best cravats, and pivoted themselves over the counter with surprising activity. They wanted to show us upstairs at once; but on the principle of business first and pleasure afterwards, we stayed to purchase the tea. Here Miss Matty's absence of mind betrayed itself. If she was made aware that she had been drinking green tea at any time, she always thought it her duty to lie awake half the night afterward (I have known her take it in ignorance many a time without such effects), and consequently green tea was prohibited the house; yet to-day she herself asked for the obnoxious article, under the impression that she was talking about the silk. However, the mistake was soon rectified; and then the silks were unrolled in good truth. By this time the shop was pretty well filled, for it was Cranford market day, and many of the farmers and country people of the neighbourhood round came in, sleeking down their hair, and glancing shyly about, from under their eyelids, as anxious to take back some notion of the unusual gaiety to the mistress or the lasses at home, and yet feeling that they were out of place among the smart shopmen and gay shawls and summer prints. One honest-looking man, however, made

his way up to the counter at which we stood, and boldly asked to look at a shawl or two . . . and it soon became a question with me, whether he or Miss Matty would keep their shopman the longest time. He thought each shawl more beautiful than the last; and as for Miss Matty, she smiled and sighed over each fresh bale that was brought out; one colour set off another, and the heap together would, as she said, make even the rainbow look poor.

"I am afraid," said she, hesitating, "whichever I choose I shall wish I had taken another. Look at this lovely crimson! it would be so warm in winter. But spring is coming on, you know. I wish I could have a gown for every season," said she, dropping her voice—as we all did in Cranford whenever we talked of anything we wished for but could not afford. "However," she continued, in a louder and more cheerful tone, "it would give me a great deal of trouble to take care of them if I had them; so, I think, I'll only take one. But which must it be, my dear?"

And now she hovered over a lilac with yellow spots, while I pulled out a quiet sage-green that had faded into insignificance under the more brilliant colours, but which was nevertheless a good silk in its humble way. Our attention was called off to our neighbour. He had chosen a shawl of about thirty shillings' value; and his face looked broadly happy, under the anticipation, no doubt, of the pleasant surprise he should give to some Molly or Jenny of his acquaintance; he had tugged a leathern purse out of his breeches pocket, and had offered a five-pound note in payment for the shawl, and for some parcels which had been brought round to him from the grocery counter; and it was just at this point that he attracted our notice. The shopman was examining the note with a puzzled, doubtful air.

"Town and County Bank! I am not sure, sir, but I believe

we have received a warning against notes issued by this bank only this morning. I will just step and ask Mr. Johnson, sir; but I'm afraid I must trouble you for payment in cash, or a note from a different bank."

I never saw a man's countenance fall so suddenly into dismay and bewilderment. It was almost piteous to see the rapid change.

"Dang it!" said he, striking his fist down on the table, as if to try which was the harder, "the chap talks as if notes and gold were to be had for the picking up."

Miss Matty had forgotten her silk gown in her interest for the man. I don't think she had caught the name of the bank, and in my nervous cowardice I was anxious she should not; and so I began admiring the yellow-spotted lilac gown that I had been utterly condemning only a minute before. But it was of no use.

"What bank was it? I mean what bank did your note belong to?"

"Town and County Bank."

"Let me see it," said she quietly to the shopman, gently taking it out of his hand, as he brought it back to return it to the farmer.

Mr. Johnson was very sorry, but, from information received, the notes issued by that bank were little better than waste paper.

"I don't understand it," said Miss Matty to me in a low voice. "That is our bank, is it not?—the Town and County Bank?"

"Yes," said I. "This lilac silk will just match the ribbons in your cap, I believe. . . ."

"Never mind about the silks for a few minutes, dear. I don't understand you, sir," turning now to the shopman, who had been attending to the farmer. "Is this a forged note?"

"Oh no, ma'am. It is a true note of its kind; but you see, ma'am, it is a joint-stock bank, and there are reports out that it is likely to break. Mr. Johnson is only doing his duty, ma'am, as I am sure Mr. Dobson knows."

But Mr. Dobson could not respond to the appealing bow by any answering smile. He was turning the note absently over in his fingers, looking gloomily enough at the parcel containing the lately-chosen shawl.

"It's hard upon a poor man," said he, "as earns every farthing with the sweat of his brow. However, there's no help for it. You must take back your shawl, my man; Lizzie must go on with her cloak for a while. And yon figs for the little ones—I promised them to 'em—I'll take them; but the 'bacco, and the other things——"

"I will give you five sovereigns for your note, my good man," said Miss Matty. "I think there is some great mistake about it, for I am one of the shareholders, and I'm sure they would have told me if things had not been going on right . . . only I would rather exchange my gold for the note, if you please," turning to the farmer, "and then you can take your wife the shawl. It is only going without my gown for a few days longer," she continued, speaking to me. "Then I have no doubt everything will be cleared up."

"But if it is cleared up the wrong way?" said I.

"Why, then it will only have been common honesty in me, as a shareholder, to have given this good man the money. I am quite clear about it in my own mind; but, you know, I can never speak quite as comprehensibly as others can; only you must give me your note, Mr. Dobson, if you please, and go on with your purchases with these sovereigns."

The man looked at her with silent gratitude—too awkward to put his thanks into words; but he hung back for a minute or two, fumbling with his note.

"I'm loth to make another one lose instead of me, if it is a loss; but, you see, five pounds is a deal of money to a man with a family; and, as you say, ten to one in a day or two the note will be as good as gold again."

"No hope of that, friend," said the shopman.

"The more reason why I should take it," said Miss Matty, quietly. She pushed her sovereigns towards the man, who slowly laid down his note in exchange. "Thank you. I will wait a day or two before I purchase any of those silks; perhaps you will then have a greater choice. My dear, will you come upstairs?"

MRS. GASKELL: *Cranford*

Tending the Sick

You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window-panes of many of them were broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at midday. After the account I have given of the state of the street, no one can be surprised that on going into the cellar inhabited by Davenport, the smell was so foetid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, as those inured to such things do, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up; the fireplace was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's lair, and cried in the dank loneliness.

"See, missis, I'm back again.—Hold your noise, children,

and don't mither your mammy for bread, here's a chap as has got some for you."

In that dim light, which was darkness to strangers, they clustered round Barton, and tore from him the food he had brought with him. It was a large hunch of bread, but it had vanished in an instant.

"We mun do summut for 'em," said he to Wilson. "Ye stop here, and I'll be back in half an hour."

So he strode, and ran, and hurried home. He emptied into the useful pocket-handkerchief the little meal remaining in the mug. Mary would have her tea at Miss Simmonds'; her food for the day was safe. Then he went upstairs for his better coat, and his one, gay, red-and-yellow silk pocket-handkerchief—his jewels, his plate, his valuables these were. He went to the pawnshop; he pawned them for five shillings; he stopped not, nor stayed, till he was once more in London Road, within five minutes walk of Berry Street—then he loitered in his gait, in order to discover the shops he wanted. He bought meat, and a loaf of bread, candles, chips, and from a little retail yard he purchased a couple of hundredweights of coals. Some money yet remained—all was destined for them, but he did not yet know how best to spend it. Food, light and warmth he had instantly seen were necessary; for luxuries he would wait. Wilson's eyes filled with tears when he saw Barton enter with his purchases. He understood it all, and longed to be again in work, that he might help in some of these material ways, without feeling that he was using his son's money. But though "silver and gold he had none," he gave heart-service, and love-works of far more value. Nor was John Barton behind in these. "The fever" was (as it usually is in Manchester) of a low, putrid, typhoid kind; brought on by miserable living, filthy neighbourhood, and great depression of mind and body. It is virulent, malignant,

and highly infectious. But the poor are fatalists with regard to infection; and well for them it is so, for in their crowded dwellings no invalid can be isolated. Wilson asked Barton if he thought he should catch it, and was laughed at for his idea.

The two men, rough, tender nurses as they were, lighted the fire, which smoked and puffed into the room as if it did not know the way up the damp unused chimney. The very smoke seemed purifying and healthy in the thick clammy air. The children clamoured again for bread; but this time Barton took a piece first to the poor, helpless, hopeless woman, who still sat by the side of her husband, listening to his anxious miserable mutterings. She took the bread, when it was put into her hand, and broke a bit, but could not eat. She was past hunger. She fell down on the floor with a heavy unresisting bang. The men looked puzzled. "She's well-nigh clemmed," said Barton. "Folk do say one mustn't give clemmed people much to eat; but, bless us, she'll eat naught."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Wilson. "I'll take these two big lads, as does naught but fight, home to my missis's for to-night, and I will get a jug o' tea. Them women always does best with tea and such-like slop."

So Barton was now left alone with a little child, crying (when it had done eating) for mammy; with a fainting, dead-like woman; and with a sick man, whose mutterings were rising up to screams and shrieks of agonised anxiety. He carried the woman to the fire, and chafed her hands. He looked around for something to raise her head. There was literally nothing but some loose bricks. However, those he got; and taking off his coat he covered them with it as well as he could. He pulled her feet to the fire, which now began to emit some faint heat. He looked round for water, but the poor woman had been too weak to drag herself out to the distant pump, and water there was none. He snatched the

child, and ran up the area steps to the room above, and borrowed their only saucepan with some water in it. Then he began, with the useful skill of a working-man, to make some gruel; and when it was hastily made, he seized a battered iron tablespoon (kept when many other little things had been sold in a lot in order to feed baby), and with it he forced one or two drops between her clenched teeth. The mouth opened mechanically to receive more, and gradually she revived. She sat up and looked round; and recollecting all, fell down again in weak and passive despair. Her little child crawled to her, and wiped with its fingers the thick-coming tears which she now had strength to weep. It was now high time to attend to the man. He lay on straw so damp and mouldy no dog would have chosen it in preference to flags; over it was a piece of sacking, coming next to his worn skeleton of a body; above him was mustered every article of clothing that could be spared by mother or children this bitter weather; and in addition to his own, these might have given as much warmth as one blanket, could they have been kept on him; but as he restlessly tossed to and fro, they fell off and left him shivering in spite of the burning heat of his skin. Every now and then he started up in his naked madness, looking like the prophet of woe in the fearful plague picture; but he soon fell again in exhaustion, and Barton found he must be closely watched, lest in these falls he should injure himself against the hard brick floor. He was thankful when Wilson reappeared, carrying in both hands a jug of steaming tea, intended for the poor wife; but when the delirious husband saw drink, he snatched at it with animal instinct, with a selfishness he had never shown in health.

Then the two men consulted together. It seemed decided without a word being spoken on the subject, that both should spend the night with the forlorn couple; that was settled.

But could no doctor be had? In all probability no; the next day an infirmary order must be begged, but meanwhile the only medical advice they could have must be from a druggist's. So Barton (being the moneyed man) set out to find a shop in London Road.

It is a pretty sight to walk through a street with lighted shops; the gas is so brilliant, the display of goods so much more vividly shown than by day, and of all shops a druggist's looks the most like the tales of our childhood, from Aladdin's garden of enchanted fruits to the charming Rosamond with her purple jar. No such associations had Barton; yet he felt the contrast between the well-filled, well-lighted shops and the dim gloomy cellar, and it made him moody that such contrasts should exist. They are the mysterious problem of life to more than him. . . .

He reached a druggist's shop, and entered. The druggist (whose smooth manners seemed to have been salved over with his own spermaceti) listened attentively to Barton's description of Davenport's illness; concluded it was typhus fever, very prevalent in that neighbourhood; and proceeded to make up a bottle of medicine, sweet spirits of nitre, or some such innocent potion, very good for slight colds, but utterly powerless to stop, for an instant, the raging fever of the poor man it was intended to relieve. He recommended the same course they had previously determined to adopt, applying the next morning for an infirmary order; and Barton left the shop with a comfortable faith in the physic given him; for men of his class, if they believe in physic at all, believe that every prescription is equally efficacious.

Meanwhile, Wilson had done what he could at Davenport's home. He had soothed and covered the man many a time; he had fed and hushed the little child, and spoken tenderly to the woman, who lay still in her weakness and

weariness. He had opened a door, but only for an instant; it led into a back cellar, with a grating instead of a window, down which dropped the moisture from pig-styes and worse abominations. It was not paved; the floor was one mass of bad-smelling mud. It had never been used, for there was not an article of furniture in it; nor could a human being, much less a pig, have lived there many days. Yet the "back apartment" made a difference in the rent. The Davenports paid threepence more for having two rooms.

MRS. GASKELL: *Mary Barton*

Going to Court

WELL, there came a happy day in Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's existence when this angel was admitted into the Paradise of a Court which she coveted; her sister-in-law acting as her god-mother. On the appointed day, Sir Pitt and his lady, in their great family carriage (just newly built, and ready for the Baronet's assumption of the office of High Sheriff of his county), drove up to the little house in Curzon Street, to the edification of Raggles, who was watching from his greengrocer's shop, and saw fine plumes within, and enormous bunches of flowers in the breasts of the new livery-coats of the footmen.

Sir Pitt, in a glittering uniform, descended and went into Curzon Street, his sword between his legs. Little Rawdon stood with his face against the parlour window-panes, smiling and nodding with all his might to his aunt in the carriage within; and presently Sir Pitt issued forth from the house again, leading forth a lady with grand feathers, covered in a white shawl, and holding up daintily a train of magnifi-

cent brocade. She stepped into the vehicle as if she were a princess and accustomed all her life to go to Court, smiling graciously on the footman at the door, and on Sir Pitt, who followed her into the carriage.

Then Rawdon followed in his old Guard's uniform, which had grown wofully shabby, and was much too tight. He was to have followed the procession, and waited upon his sovereign in a cab; but that his good-natured sister-in-law insisted that they should be a family party. The coach was large, the ladies not very big, they would hold their trains in their laps—finally, the four went fraternally together; and their carriage presently joined the line of loyal equipages which was making its way down Piccadilly and St. James's Street, towards the old brick palace where the Star of Brunswick was in waiting to receive his nobles and gentlefolks.

Becky felt as if she could bless the people out of the carriage windows, so elated was she in spirit, and so strong a sense had she of the dignified position which she had at last attained in life . . . to be, and to be thought a respectable woman, was Becky's aim in life, and she got up the genteel with amazing assiduity, readiness and success. We have said, there were times when she believed herself to be a fine lady, and forgot that there was no money in the chest at home—duns round the gate, tradesmen to coax and wheedle—no ground to walk upon, in a word. And as she went to Court in a carriage, the family carriage, she adopted a demeanour so grand, self-satisfied, deliberate and imposing, that it made even Lady Jane laugh. She walked into the royal apartments with a toss of the head which would have befitted an empress, and I have no doubt had she been one, she would have become the character perfectly.

We are authorised to state that Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's *costume de cour* on the occasion of her presentation to the

Sovereign was of the most elegant and brilliant description. Some ladies we may have seen—we who wear stars and cordons, and attend the St. James's assemblies, or we, who in muddy boots, dawdle up and down Pall Mall, and peep into the coaches as they drive up with the great folks in their feathers—some ladies of fashion, I say, we may have seen about two o'clock of the forenoon of a levée day, as the lace-jacketed band of the Life Guards are blowing triumphal marches seated on those prancing music-stools, their cream-coloured chargers—who are by no means lovely and enticing objects at that early period of noon. A stout countess of sixty, *décolletée*, painted, wrinkled, with rouge up to her drooping eyelids, and diamonds twinkling in her wig, is a wholesome and edifying, but not a pleasant sight. She has the faded look of a St. James's Street illumination, as it may be seen of an early morning, when half the lamps are out, and the others are blinking wanly, as if they were about to vanish like ghosts before the dawn. . . . Our beloved Rebecca . . . could bear any sunshine as yet; and her dress, though if you were to see it now, any present lady of Vanity Fair would pronounce it to be the most foolish and preposterous attire ever worn, was as handsome in her eyes and those of the public . . . as the most brilliant costume of the most famous beauty of the present season. . . . Mrs. Rawdon's dress was pronounced to be *charmante* on the eventful day of her presentation. Even good little Lady Jane was forced to acknowledge this effect, as she looked at her kinswoman; and owned sorrowfully to herself that she was quite inferior in taste to Mrs. Becky.

She did not know how much care, thought, and genius Mrs. Rawdon had bestowed upon that garment. Rebecca had as good taste as any milliner in Europe, and such a clever way of doing things as Lady Jane little understood. The latter

quickly spied out the magnificence of the brocade of Becky's train, and the splendour of the lace on her dress.

The brocade was an old remnant, Becky said; and as for the lace it was a great bargain. She had had it these hundred years.

"My dear Mrs. Crawley, it must have cost a little fortune," Lady Jane said, looking down at her own lace, which was not nearly so good; and then examining the quality of the ancient brocade which formed the material of Mrs. Rawdon's Court dress, she felt inclined to say that she could not afford such fine clothing, but checked that speech with an effort, as one uncharitable to her kinswoman.

And yet, if Lady Jane had known all, I think even her kindly temper would have failed her. The fact is, when she was putting Sir Pitt's house in order, Mrs. Rawdon had found the lace and the brocade in old wardrobes, the property of the former ladies of the house, and had quietly carried the goods home, and had suited them to her own little person. . . .

And the diamonds—"Where the doose did you get the diamonds, Becky?" said her husband, admiring some jewels which he had never seen before, and which sparkled in her ears and on her neck with brilliance and profusion.

Becky blushed a little, and looked at him hard for a moment. Pitt Crawley blushed a little too, and looked out of window. The fact is, he had given her a very small portion of the brilliants; a pretty diamond clasp, which confined a pearl necklace which she wore; and the Baronet had omitted to mention the circumstances to his lady.

Becky looked at her husband, and then at Sir Pitt, with an air of saucy triumph—as much as to say, "Shall I betray you?"

"Guess!" she said to her husband. "Why, you silly man," she continued, "where do you suppose I got them?—all

except the little clasp which a dear friend of mine gave me long ago. I hired them to be sure. I hired them at Mr. Polonius's, in Coventry Street. You don't suppose that all the diamonds which go to Court belong to the owners; like those beautiful stones which Lady Jane has, and which are much handsomer than any which I have, I am certain."

"They are family jewels," said Sir Pitt, again looking uneasy. And in this family conversation the carriage rolled down the street, until its cargo was finally discharged at the gates of the palace where the Sovereign was sitting in state.

The diamonds, which had created Rawdon's admiration, never went back to Mr. Polonius, of Coventry Street, and that gentleman never applied for their restoration; but they retired into a little private repository, in an old desk, which Amelia Sedley had given her years and years ago, and in which Becky kept a number of useful, and perhaps valuable things, about which her husband knew nothing. To know nothing, or little, is in the nature of some husbands. . . . Thus Rawdon knew nothing about the brilliant diamond ear-rings, or the superb brilliant ornament which decorated the fair bosom of his lady; but Lord Steyne, who was in his place at Court, as Lord of the Powder Closet, and one of the great dignatories and illustrious defences of the throne of England, and came up with all his stars, garters, collars and cordons, and paid particular attention to the little woman, knew whence the jewels came, and who paid for them.

As he bowed over her he smiled, and quoted the hackneyed and beautiful lines, from "The Rape of the Lock," about Belinda's diamonds, "which Jews might kiss and infidels adore."

"But I hope your lordship is orthodox," said the little lady, with a toss of her head. And many ladies round about whispered and talked, and many gentlemen nodded and whis-

pered, as they saw what marked attention the great nobleman was paying to the little adventuress.

What were the circumstances of the interview between Rebecca Crawley, *née* Sharp, and her Imperial Master, it does not become such a feeble and inexperienced pen as mine to attempt to relate. The dazzled eyes close before that Magnificent Idea. Loyal respect and decency tell even the imagination not to look too keenly and audaciously about the sacred audience-chamber, but to back away rapidly, silently, and respectfully, making profound bows, out of the August Presence.

W. M. THACKERAY: *Vanity Fair*

Finances

THE bills of the little household, which had been settled weekly, first fell into arrears. The remittances had not arrived from India, Mr. Sedley told his wife with a disturbed face. As she had paid her bills very regularly hitherto, one or two of the tradesmen to whom the poor lady was obliged to go round asking for time were very angry at a delay to which they were perfectly used from more irregular customers. Emmy's contribution, paid over cheerfully without any questions, kept the little company in half rations however. And the first six months passed away pretty easily: old Sedley still keeping up with the notion that his shares must rise and that all would be well.

No sixty pounds, however, came to help the household at the end of the half-year; and it fell deeper and deeper into trouble—Mrs. Sedley, who was growing infirm and was much shaken, remained silent or wept a great deal with Mrs.

Clapp in the kitchen. The butcher was particularly surly: the grocer insolent: once or twice little Georgy had grumbled about the dinners: and Amelia, who still would have been satisfied with a slice of bread for her own dinner, could not but perceive that her son was neglected, and purchased little things out of her private purse to keep the boy in health.

At last they told her, or told her such a garbled story as people in difficulties tell. One day, her own money having been received, and Amelia about to pay it over: she who had kept an account of the moneys expended by her, proposed to keep a certain portion back out of her dividend, having contracted engagements for a new suit for Georgy.

Then it came out that Jos's remittances were not paid; that the house was in difficulties, which Amelia ought to have seen before, her mother said, but she cared for nothing or nobody except Georgy. At this she passed all her money across the table, without a word, to her mother, and returned to her room to cry her eyes out. She had a great access of sensibility too that day, when obliged to go and countermand the clothes, the darling clothes on which she had set her heart for Christmas Day, and the cut and fashion of which she had arranged in many conversations with a small milliner, her friend.

Hardest of all, she had to break the matter to Georgy, who made a loud outcry. Everybody had new clothes at Christmas. He *would* have new clothes. She had promised them to him. The poor widow had only kisses to give him. She darned the old suit in tears. She cast about among her little ornaments to see if she could sell anything to procure the desired novelties. There was her India shawl that Dobbin had sent her. She remembered in former days going with her mother to a fine India shop on Ludgate Hill where the ladies had all sorts of dealings and bargains in these articles. Her cheeks

flushed and her eyes shone with pleasure as she thought of this resource, and she kissed away George to school in the morning, smiling brightly after him. The boy felt that there was good news in her look.

Packing up her shawl in a handkerchief (another of the gifts of the good major), she hid them under her cloak, and walked flushed and eager all the way to Ludgate Hill, tripping along by the Park wall, and running over the crossings, so that many a man turned as she hurried by him, and looked after her rosy pretty face. She calculated how she should spend the proceeds of her shawl: how, besides the clothes, she would buy the books that he longed for, and pay his half-year's schooling; and how she would buy a cloak for her father instead of that old greatcoat which he wore. She was not mistaken as to the value of the major's gift. It was a very fine and beautiful web: and the merchant made a very good bargain when he gave her twenty guineas for her shawl.

She ran on amazed and flurried with her riches to Darton's shop in St. Paul's Churchyard, and there purchased the *Parent's Assistant* and the *Sandford and Merton* Georgy longed for, and got into the coach there with her parcel and went home exulting. And she pleased herself by writing in the fly-leaf in her neatest little hand, "George Osborne, A Christmas gift from his affectionate mother." The books are extant to this day, with the fair delicate superscription.

She was going from her own room with the books in her hand to place them on George's table, where he might find them on his return from school; when, in the passage, she and her mother met. The gilt bindings of the seven handsome little volumes caught the old lady's eye.

"What are those?" she said.

"Some books for Georgy," Amelia replied—"I—I promised them to him at Christmas."

"Books!" cried the elder lady, indignantly. "Books, when the whole house wants bread! Books, when to keep you and your son in luxury, and your dear father out of gaol, I've sold every trinket I had, the India shawl from my back—even down to the very spoons, that our tradesmen mightn't insult us, and that Mr. Clapp, which indeed he is justly entitled, being not a hard landlord, and a civil man, and a father, might have his rent. O Amelia! you break my heart with your books and that boy of yours, whom you are ruining, though part with him you will not. O Amelia, may God send you a more dutiful child than I have had! There's Jos deserts his father in his old age: and there's George, who might be provided for, and who might be rich, going to school like a lord, with a gold watch and chain round his neck—while my dear, dear old man is without a sh-shilling." Hysteric sobs and cries ended Mrs. Sedley's speech—it echoed through every room in the small house, whereof the other female inmates heard every word of the colloquy.

"O mother, mother!" cried poor Amelia in reply. "You told me nothing—I—I promised him the books. I—I only sold my shawl this morning. Take the money—take everything"—and with quivering hands she took out her silver, and her sovereigns—her precious golden sovereigns, which she thrust into the hands of her mother, whence they overflowed and tumbled, rolling down the stairs.

W. M. THACKERAY: *Vanity Fair*

Undergraduate Life

THUS young Pen, the only son of an estated country gentleman, with a good allowance, and a gentlemanlike bearing

and person, looked to be a lad of much more consequence than he was really; and was held by the Oxbridge authorities, tradesmen and undergraduates, as quite a young buck and member of the aristocracy. His manner was frank, brave, and perhaps a little impertinent, as becomes a high-spirited youth. He was perfectly generous and free-handed with his money, which seemed pretty plentiful. He loved joviality, and had a good voice for a song. Boat-racing had not risen in Pen's time to the *fureur* which, as we are given to understand, it has since attained in the university; and riding and tandem-driving were the fashions of the ingenuous youth. Pen rode well to hounds, appeared in pink, as became a young buck, and, not particularly extravagant in equestrian or any other amusement, yet managed to run up a fine bill at Nile's, the livery-stable keeper, and in a number of other quarters. In fact, this lucky young gentleman had almost every taste to a considerable degree. He was very fond of books of all sorts: Dr. Portman had taught him to like rare editions, and his own taste led him to like beautiful bindings. It was marvellous what tall copies, and gilding, and marbling, and blind-tooling, the booksellers and binders put upon Pen's bookshelves. He had a very fair taste in matters of art, and a keen relish for prints of a high school—none of your French Opera Dancers, or tawdry racing prints, such as had delighted the simple eyes of Mr. Spicer, his predecessor—but your Stranges, and Rembrandt etchings, and Wilkies before the letter, with which his apartments were furnished presently in the most perfect good taste, as was allowed in the university, where this young fellow got no small reputation. We have mentioned that he showed a certain partiality for rings, jewellery, and fine raiment of all sorts; and it must be owned that Mr. Pen, during his time at the university, was rather a dressy man, and loved to array himself in splendour.

He and his polite friends would dress themselves out with as much care in order to go and dine at each other's rooms, as other folks would who were going to enslave a mistress. They said he used to wear rings over his kid gloves, which he always denies; but what follies will not youth perpetrate with its own gravity and simplicity? That he took perfumed baths is a truth; and he used to say that he took them after meeting certain men of a very low set in hall.

In Pen's second year, when Miss Fotheringay made her chief hit in London, and scores of prints were published of her, Pen had one of these hung in his bedroom, and confided to the men of his set how awfully, how wildly, how madly, how passionately, he loved that woman. He showed them in confidence the verses he had written to her, and his brow would darken, his eyes roll, his chest heave with emotion as he recalled that fatal period of his life, and described the woes and agonies which he had suffered. The verses were copied out, handed about, sneered at, admired, passed from coterie to coterie. There are few things which elevate a lad in the estimation of his brother boys, more than to have a character for a great and romantic passion. Perhaps there is something noble in it at all times—among very young men it is considered heroic—Pen was pronounced a tremendous fellow. They said he had almost committed suicide: that he had fought a duel with a baronet about her. Freshmen pointed him out to each other. As at the promenade time at two o'clock he swaggered out of college, surrounded by his cronies, he was famous to behold. He was elaborately attired. He would ogle the ladies who came to lionise the university, and passed before him on the arms of happy gownsmen, and give his opinion upon their personal charms, or their toilettes, with the gravity of a critic whose experience entitled him to speak with authority. Men used to say

that they had been walking with Pendennis, and were as pleased to be seen in his company as some of us would be if we walked with a duke down Pall Mall. He and the Proctor capped each other as they met, as if they were rival powers, and the men hardly knew which was the greater.

In fact, in the course of his second year, Arthur Pendennis had become one of the men of fashion in the university. It is curious to watch that facile admiration and simple fidelity of youth. They hang round a leader: and wonder at him, and love him, and imitate him. No generous boy ever lived, I suppose, that has not had some wonderment of admiration for another boy; and Monsieur Pen at Oxbridge had his school, his faithful band of friends, and his rivals. When the young men heard at the haberdashers that Mr. Pendennis, of Boniface, had just ordered a crimson satin cravat, you would see a couple of dozen crimson satin cravats in Main Street in the course of the week—and Simon, the jeweller, was known to sell no less than two gross of Pendennis pins, from a pattern which the young gentleman had selected in his shop.

Now if any person with an arithmetical turn of mind will take the trouble to calculate what a sum of money it would cost a young man to indulge freely in all the above propensities which we have said Mr. Pen possessed, it will be seen that a young fellow, with such liberal tastes and amusements, must needs in the course of two or three years spend or owe a very handsome sum of money. We have said our friend Pen had not a very calculating turn. No one propensity of his was outrageously extravagant; and it is certain that Paddington's tailor's account; Guttlebury's cook's bill for dinners; Dillon Tandy's bill with Finn, the print-seller, for Raphael-Morghens and Landseer proofs, and Wormall's dealings with Pakton, the great bookseller, for Aldine editions, black-letter folios, and richly illuminated Missals of the

XVI Century; and Snaffle's or Foker's score with Nile the horsedealer, were, each and all of them, incomparably greater than any little bills which Mr. Pen might run up with the above-mentioned tradesmen. But Pendennis of Boniface had the advantages over all these young gentlemen, his friends and associates, of a universality of taste; and whereas young Lord Paddington did not care twopence for the most beautiful print, or to look into any gilt frame that had not a mirror within it; and Guttlebury did not mind in the least how he was dressed, and had an aversion for horse exercise, nay a terror of it; and Snaffle never read any printed works but the *Racing Calendar* or *Bell's Life*, or cared for any manuscript except his greasy little scrawl of a betting-book:—our Catholic-minded young friend occupied himself in every one of the branches of science or pleasure above-mentioned, and distinguished himself tolerably in each.

Hence young Pen got a prodigious reputation in the university, and was hailed as a sort of Crichton; and as for the English verse prize . . . Jones of Jesus carried it that year certainly, but the undergraduates thought Pen's a much finer poem, and he had his verses printed at his own expense, and distributed in gilt morocco covers amongst his acquaintance. . . .

Amongst these friends, then, and a host more, Pen passed more than two brilliant and happy years of his life. He had his fill of pleasure and popularity. No dinner- or supper-party was complete without him; and Pen's jovial wit, and Pen's songs, and dashing courage, and frank and manly bearing, charmed all the undergraduates, and even disarmed the tutors who cried out at his idleness, and murmured at his extravagant way of life. Though he became the favourite and leader of young men who were much his superiors in wealth and station, he was much too generous to endeavour to propitiate them by any meanness or cringing on his own

part, and would not neglect the humblest man of his acquaintance in order to curry favour with the richest young grandee in the university. His name is still remembered at the Union Debating Club, as one of the brilliant orators of his day. By the way, from having been an ardent Tory in his freshman's year, his principles took a sudden turn afterwards, and he became a Liberal of the most violent order. He avowed himself a Dantonist, and asserted that Louis the Sixteenth was served right. And as for Charles the First, he vowed that he would chop off that monarch's head with his own right hand were he then in the room at the Union Debating Club, and had Cromwell no other executioner for the traitor. He and Lord Magnus Charters, the Marquis of Runnymede's son, before-mentioned, were the most truculent republicans of their day. . . .

Among the young ones Pen became famous and popular: not that he did much, but there was a general determination that he could do a great deal if he chose. "Ah, if Pendennis of Boniface would but try," the men said, "he might do anything." He was backed for the Greek Ode won by Smith of Trinity; everybody was sure he would have the Latin hexameter prize which Brown of St. John's, however, carried off, and in this way, one university honour after another was lost by him, until, after two or three failures, Mr. Pen ceased to compete. But he got a declamation prize in his own college, and brought home to his mother and Laura at Fair Oaks a set of prize books begilt with the college arms, and so big, well-bound, and magnificent, that these ladies thought there had been no such prize ever given in a college before as this of Pen's, and that he had won the very largest honour which Oxbridge was capable of awarding.

W. M. THACKERAY: *The History of Pendennis*

A Christening

It happened to be an iron-grey autumnal day, with a shrewd east wind blowing—a day in keeping with the proceedings. Mr. Dombey represented in himself the wind, the shade, and the autumn of the christening. He stood in his library to receive the company, as hard and cold as the weather; and when he looked out through the glass room, at the trees in the little garden, their brown and yellow leaves came down as if he blighted them.

Ugh! They were black, cold rooms; and seemed to be in mourning, like the inmates of the house. The books precisely matched as to size, and drawn up in line, like soldiers, looked in their cold, hard, slippery uniforms, as if they had but one idea among them, and that was a freezer. The bookcase, glazed and locked, repudiated all familiarities. Mr. Pitt, in bronze at the top, with no trace of his celestial origin about him, guarded the unattainable treasure like an enchanted Moor. A dusty urn at each high corner, dug up from an ancient tomb, preached desolation and decay, as from two pulpits; and the chimney-glass, reflecting Mr. Dombey and his portrait at one blow, seemed fraught with melancholy meditations.

The stiff and stark fire-irons appeared to claim a nearer relationship than anything else there to Mr. Dombey, with his buttoned coat, his white cravat, his heavy gold watch-chain, and his creaking boots. But this was before the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Chick, his lawful relatives, who soon presented themselves.

“My dear Paul,” Mrs. Chick murmured, as she embraced him. “The beginning, I hope, of many joyful days!”

“Thank you, Louisa,” said Mr. Dombey, grimly. “How do you do, Mr. John?”

"How do you do, sir?" said Chick.

He gave Mr. Dombey his hand, as if he feared it might electrify him. Mr. Dombey took it as if it were a fish, or seaweed, or some such clammy substance, and immediately returned it to him with exalted politeness.

"Perhaps, Louisa," said Mr. Dombey, slightly turning his head in his cravat, as if it were a socket, "you would have preferred a fire?"

"Oh, my dear Paul, no," said Mrs. Chick, who had much ado to keep her teeth from chattering; "not for me."

"Mr. John," said Mr. Dombey, "you are not sensible of any chill?"

Mr. John, who had already got both his hands in his pockets over the wrists . . . protested that he was perfectly comfortable.

He added in a low voice, "With my tiddle tol toor rul"—when he was providentially stopped by Towlinson, who announced—

"Miss Tox!"

And enter that fair enslaver, with a blue nose and indescribably frosty face, referable to her being very thinly clad in a maze of fluttering odds and ends, to do honour to the ceremony.

"How do you do, Miss Tox?" said Mr. Dombey.

Miss Tox, in the midst of her spreading gauzes, went down altogether like an opera-glass shutting up; she curtsied so low in acknowledgment of Mr. Dombey's advancing a step to meet her.

"I can never forget this occasion, sir," said Miss Tox, softly. "'Tis impossible. My dear Louisa, I can hardly believe the evidence of my senses."

If Miss Tox could believe the evidence of one of her senses, it was a cold day. That was quite clear. She took an

early opportunity of promoting the circulation in the tip of her nose by secretly chafing it with her pocket-handkerchief, lest, by its very low temperature, it should disagreeably astonish the baby when she came to kiss it.

The baby soon appeared, carried in great glory by Richards; while Florence, in custody of that active young constable, Susan Nipper, brought up the rear. Though the whole nursery party were dressed by this time in lighter mourning than at first, there was enough in the appearance of the bereaved children to make the day no brighter. The baby too—it might have been Miss Tox's nose—began to cry. . . .

"Now, Florence, child!" said her aunt briskly, "what are you doing, love? Show yourself to him. Engage his attention, my dear!"

The atmosphere became, or might have become colder and colder, when Mr. Dombey stood frigidly watching his little daughter, who, clapping her hands, and standing on tiptoe before the throne of his son and heir, lured him to bend down from his high estate, and look at her. Some honest act of Richards's may have aided the effect, but he did look down and held his peace. As his sister hid behind her nurse, he followed her with his eyes; and when she peeped out with a merry cry to him, he sprang up and crowed lustily—laughing outright when she ran in upon him; and seeming to fondle her curls with his tiny hands, while she smothered him with kisses.

Was Mr. Dombey pleased to see this? He testified no pleasure by the relaxation of a nerve; but outward tokens of any kind of feeling were unusual with him. If any sunbeam stole into the room to light the children at their play, it never reached his face. He looked on so fixedly and coldly, that the warm light vanished even from the laughing eyes of little Florence, when, at last, they happened to meet his.

It was a dull, grey autumn day indeed, and in a minute's pause and silence that took place, the leaves fell sorrowfully.

"Mr. John," said Mr. Dombey, referring to his watch, and assuming his hat and gloves. "Take my sister, if you please: my arm to-day is Miss Tox's. You had better go first with Master Paul, Richards. Be very careful."

In Mr. Dombey's carriage, Dombey and Son, Miss Tox, Mrs. Chick, Richards, and Florence. In a little carriage following it, Susan and the owner, Mr. Chick. Susan looking out of window, without intermission, as a relief from the embarrassment of confronting the large face of that gentleman, and thinking whenever anything rattled that he was putting up in paper an appropriate pecuniary compliment for herself.

Once upon the road to church, Mr. Dombey clapped his hands for the amusement of his son. At which instance of parental enthusiasm Miss Tox was enchanted. But exclusive of this incident, the chief difference between the christening party and a party in a mourning coach, consisted in the colours of the carriage and horses.

Arrived at the church steps, they were received by a portentous beadle. Mr. Dombey dismounting first to help the ladies out, and standing near him at the church door, looked like another beadle. A beadle less gorgeous but more dreadful; the beadle of private life; the beadle of our business and our bosoms.

Miss Tox's hand trembled as she slipped it through Mr. Dombey's arm, and felt herself escorted up the steps, preceded by a cocked hat and a Babylonian collar. It seemed for a moment like that other solemn institution, "Wilt thou have this man, Lucretia?" "Yes, I will."

"Please to bring the child in quick out of the air there," whispered the beadle, holding open the inner door of the church.

Little Paul might have asked with Hamlet "into my grave?" so chill and earthy was the place. The tall shrouded pulpit and reading desk; the dreary perspective of empty pews stretching away under the galleries, and empty benches mounting to the roof and lost in the shadow of the great grim organ; the dusty matting and cold stone slabs; the grisly free seats in the aisles; and the damp corner by the bell-rope, where the black trestles used for funerals were stowed away, along with some shovels and baskets and a coil or two of deadly-looking rope; the strange, unusual, uncomfortable smell, and the cadaverous light; were all in unison. It was a cold and dismal scene. . . .

Presently the clerk (the only cheerful-looking object there, and *he* was an undertaker) came up with a jug of warm water, and said something, as he poured it into the font, about taking the chill off; which millions of gallons boiling hot could not have done for the occasion. Then the clergyman, an amiable and mild-looking young curate, but obviously afraid of the baby, appeared, like the principal character in a ghost story, "a tall figure all in white"; at sight of whom Paul rent the air with his cries, and never left off again till he was taken out black in the face.

Even when that event had happened, to the great relief of everybody, he was heard under the portico, during the rest of the ceremony now fainter, now louder, now hushed, now bursting forth again with an irrepressible sense of his wrongs. This so distracted the attention of the two ladies, that Mrs. Chick was constantly deploying into the centre aisle, to send out messages by the pew-opener, while Miss Tox kept her Prayer-book open at Gunpowder Plot, and occasionally read responses from that service.

During the whole of these proceedings, Mr. Dombey remained as impassive and gentlemanly as ever, and perhaps

assisted in making it so cold, that the young curate smoked at the mouth as he read. The only time that he unbent his visage in the least, was when the clergyman, in delivering (very unaffectedly and simply) the closing exhortation, relative to the future examination of the child by the sponsors, happened to rest his eye on Mr. Chick; and then Mr. Dombey might have been seen to express by a majestic look that he would like to catch him at it.

It might have been well for Mr. Dombey if he had thought of his own dignity a little less; and had thought of the great origin and purpose of the ceremony in which he took so formal and stiff a part, a little more. His arrogance contrasted strangely with its history.

When it was all over, he again gave his arm to Miss Tox, and conducted her to the vestry, where he informed the clergyman how much pleasure it would have given him to have solicited the honour of his company at dinner, but for the unfortunate state of his household affairs. The register signed, and the fees paid, and the pew-opener (whose cough was very bad again) remembered, and the beadle gratified, and the sexton (who was accidentally on the doorsteps, looking with great interest at the weather) not forgotten, they got back into the carriage again, and drove home in the same bleak fellowship.

There they found Mr. Pitt turning up his nose at a cold collation, set forth in the cold pomp of glass and silver, and looking more like a dead dinner lying in state than a social refreshment. On their arrival, Miss Tox produced a mug for her godson, and Mr. Chick a knife and fork and spoon in a case. Mr. Dombey also produced a bracelet for Miss Tox; and, on the receipt of this token, Miss Tox was tenderly affected.

“Mr. John,” said Mr. Dombey, “will you take the bottom

of the table, if you please. What have you got there, Mr. John?"

"I have got a cold fillet of veal here, sir," replied Mr. Chick, rubbing his numbed hands hard together. "What have *you* got there, sir?"

"This," returned Mr. Dombey, "is some cold preparation of calf's head, I think. I see cold fowls—ham—patties—salad—lobster. Miss Tox will do me the honour of taking some wine? Champagne to Miss Tox."

There was a toothache in everything. The wine was so bitter cold that it forced a little scream from Miss Tox, which she had great difficulty in turning into a "Hem!" The veal had come from such an airy pantry, that the first taste of it had struck a sensation as of cold lead to Mr. Chick's extremities. Mr. Dombey alone remained unmoved. He might have been hung up for sale at a Russian fair as a specimen of a frozen gentleman.

The prevailing influence was too much even for his sister. She made no effort at flattery or small talk, and directed all her efforts to looking as warm as she could.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Chick, making a desperate plunge, after a long silence, and filling a glass of sherry; "I shall drink this, if you'll allow me, sir, to little Paul."

"Bless him!" murmured Miss Tox, taking a sip of wine.

"Dear little Dombey!" murmured Mrs. Chick.

"Mr. John," said Mr. Dombey, with severe gravity, "my son would feel and express himself obliged to you, I have no doubt, if he could appreciate the favour you have done him. He will prove, in time to come, I trust, equal to any responsibility that the obliging disposition of his relations and friends, in private, or the onerous nature of our position, in public, may impose upon him."

CHARLES DICKENS: *Dombey and Son*

The Difficulties of Housekeeping

I DOUBT whether two young birds could have known less about keeping house, than I and my pretty Dora did. We had a servant, of course. She kept house for us. I have still a latent belief that she must have been Mrs. Crupp's daughter in disguise, we had such an awful time with Mary Anne.

Her name was Paragon. Her nature was represented to us, when we engaged her, as being feebly expressed in her name. She had a written character, as large as a proclamation; and, according to this document, could do anything of a domestic nature I ever heard of, and a great many things I never did hear of. She was a woman in the prime of life; of a severe countenance; and subject (particularly in the arms) to a sort of perpetual measles or fiery rash. She had a cousin in the Life Guards, with such long legs that he looked like the afternoon shadow of somebody else. His shell-jacket was as much too little for him as he was too big for the premises. He made the cottage smaller than it need have been, by being so very much out of proportion to it. Besides which, the walls were not thick, and whenever he passed the evening at our house, we always knew of it by hearing one continual growl in the kitchen.

Our treasure was warranted sober and honest. I am therefore willing to believe that she was in a fit when we found her under the boiler; and that the deficient tea-spoons were attributable to the dustman. . . .

Mary Anne's cousin deserted into our coal-hole, and was brought out, to our great amazement, by a piquet of his companions in arms, who took him away handcuffed in a procession that covered our front-garden with ignominy. This nerved me to get rid of Mary Anne, who went so mildly on receipt of wages, that I was surprised, until I found out

about the tea-spoons, and also about the little sums she had borrowed in my name of the tradespeople without authority. After an interval of Mrs. Kidgerbury—the oldest inhabitant of Kentish town, I believe, who went out charing, but was too feeble to execute her conceptions of that art—we found another treasure, who was one of the most amiable of women, but who generally made a point of falling either up or down the kitchen stairs with the tray, and almost plunged into the parlour, as into a bath, with the tea-things. The ravages committed by this unfortunate rendering her dismissal necessary, she was succeeded (with intervals of Mrs. Kidgerbury) by a long line of incapables; terminating in a young person of genteel appearance, who went to Greenwich Fair in Dora's bonnet. . . .

Everybody we had anything to do with seemed to cheat us. Our appearance in a shop was a signal for the damaged goods to be brought out immediately. If we bought a lobster, it was full of water. All our meat turned out to be tough, and there was hardly any crust to our loaves. . . . As to the washerwoman pawning the clothes, and coming in a state of penitent intoxication to apologise, I suppose that might have happened several times to anybody. Also the chimney on fire, the parish engine, the perjury on the part of the beadle. But I apprehend that we were personally unfortunate in engaging a servant with a taste for cordials, who swelled our running account for porter at the public-house by such inexplicable items as “quartern rum shrub (Mrs. C.)”; “Glass rum and peppermint (Mrs. C.)”—the parentheses always referring to Dora, who was supposed, it appeared on explanation, to have imbibed the whole of the refreshments.

One of our first feats in the housekeeping way was a little dinner to Traddles. I met him in town and asked him to

walk out with me that afternoon. He readily consenting, I wrote to Dora, saying I would bring him home. . . . I could not have wished for a prettier little wife at the opposite end of the table, but I certainly could have wished, when we sate down, for a little more room. . . . There was another thing I could have wished, namely that Jip had never been encouraged to walk about the table-cloth during dinner. I began to think there was something disorderly in his being there at all, even if he had not been in the habit of putting his foot in the salt or the melted butter. . . . However, as I knew how tender-hearted my dear Dora was, and how sensitive she would be to any slight on her favourite, I hinted no objection. For similar reasons I made no allusions to the skirmishing plates upon the floor; or to the disreputable appearance of the castors, which were all at sixes and sevens, and appeared to be drunk; or to the further blockade of Traddles by wandering vegetable dishes and jugs. I could not help wondering in my own mind, as I contemplated the boiled leg of mutton before me, previous to carving it, how it came to pass that our joints of meat were of such extraordinary shapes—and whether our butcher contracted for all the deformed sheep that came into the world; but I kept my reflections to myself.

“My love,” said I to Dora, “what have you got in that dish?”

I could not imagine why Dora had been making tempting little faces at me, as though she wanted to kiss me.

“Oysters, dear,” said Dora timidly.

“Was that your thought?” said I, delighted.

“Ye—yes, Doady,” said Dora.

“There never was a happier one!” I exclaimed, laying down the carving knife and fork. “There is nothing Traddles likes so much!”

"Ye—yes, Doady," said Dora, "and so I bought a little barrel of them, and the man said they were very good. But I—I am afraid there is something the matter with them. They don't seem right." Here Dora shook her head, and diamonds twinkled in her eyes.

"They are only opened in both shells," said I. "Take the top one off, my love."

"But it won't come off," said Dora, trying very hard, and looking very much distressed.

"Do you know, Copperfield," said Traddles, cheerfully examining the dish, "I think it is in consequence—they are capital oysters, but I *think* it is in consequence—of their never having been opened."

They never had been opened; and we had no oyster knives—and couldn't have used them if we had; so we looked at the oysters and ate the mutton. At least we ate as much of it as was done, and made up with capers. If I had permitted him, I am satisfied that Traddles would have made a perfect savage of himself, and eaten a plateful of raw meat, to express enjoyment of the repast; but I would hear of no such immolation on the altar of friendship; and we had a course of bacon instead; there happening, by good fortune, to be cold bacon in the larder.

My poor little wife was in such affliction when she thought I should be annoyed, and in such a state of joy when she found I was not, that the discomfiture I had subdued very soon vanished, and we passed a happy evening; Dora sitting with her arm on my chair while Traddles and I discussed a glass of wine, and taking every opportunity of whispering in my ear that it was so good of me not to be a cruel, cross old boy. By-and-bye she made tea for us; which it was so pretty to see her do, as if she were busying herself with a set of doll's tea-things, that I was not particular about the

quality of the beverage. Then Traddles and I played a game or two at cribbage; and Dora singing to the guitar the while, it seemed to me as if our courtship and marriage were a tender dream of mine, and the night when first I listened to her voice were not yet over.

CHARLES DICKENS: *David Copperfield*

In Church

HERE is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew! With a window near it, out of which our house can be seen, and *is* seen many times during the morning's service, by Peggotty, who likes to make herself as sure as she can that it's not being robbed, or is not in flames. But though Peggotty's eye wanders, she is much offended if mine does, and frowns to me, as I stand upon the seat, that I am to look at the clergyman. But I can't always look at him—I know him without that white thing on, and I am afraid of his wondering why I stare so, and perhaps stopping the service to inquire—and what am I to do? It's a dreadful thing to gape, but I must do something. I look at my mother, but *she* pretends not to see me. I look at a boy in the aisle, and *he* makes faces at me. I look at the sunlight coming in at the open door through the porch, and there I see a stray sheep—I don't mean a sinner but mutton—half making up his mind to come into the church, I feel that if I looked at him any longer, I might be tempted to say something out loud; and what would become of me then! I look at the monumental tablets on the wall, and try to think of Mr. Bodgers late of this parish, and what the feelings of Mrs. Bodgers must have been, when affliction sore, long time Mr. Bodgers

bore, and physicians were in vain. I wonder whether they called in Mr. Chillip, and he was in vain; and if so, how he likes to be reminded of it once a week. I look from Mr. Chillip, in his Sunday neckcloth, to the pulpit; and think what a good place it would be to play in, and what a castle it would make, with another boy coming up the stairs to attack it, and having the velvet cushion with the tassels thrown down upon his head. In time my eyes gradually shut up; and from seeming to hear the clergyman singing a drowsy song in the heat, I hear nothing, until I fall off the seat with a crash, and am taken out, more dead than alive, by Peggotty.

CHARLES DICKENS: *David Copperfield*

An Evening's Entertainment

HOWEVER, it was high time now to be thinking of the play; for which great preparations were required, in the way of shawls and bonnets, not to mention one handkerchief full of oranges and another of apples, which took some time tying up, in consequence of the fruit having a tendency to roll out at the corners. At length, everything was ready, and they went off very fast; Kit's mother carrying the baby, who was dreadfully wide-awake, and Kit holding little Jacob in one hand, and escorting Barbara with the other—a state of things which occasioned the two mothers, who walked behind, to declare they looked quite family folks, and caused Barbara to blush and say, "Now don't, mother!" But Kit said she had no call to mind what they said; and indeed she need not have had, if she had known how very far from Kit's thoughts any love-making was. Poor Barbara!

At last they got to the theatre, which was Astley's: and in some two minutes after they had reached the yet unopened door, little Jacob was squeezed flat, and the baby had received divers concussions, and Barbara's mother's umbrella had been carried several yards off and passed back to her over the shoulders of the people, and Kit had hit a man on the head with the handkerchief of apples for "scrowdging" his parent with unnecessary violence, and there was a great uproar. But, when they were once past the pay-place and tearing away for very life with their checks in their hands, and, above all, when they were fairly in the theatre, and seated in such places that they couldn't have had better if they had picked them out, and taken them beforehand, all this was looked upon as quite a capital joke, and an essential part of the entertainment.

Dear, dear, what a place it looked, that Astley's; with all the paint, gilding and looking-glass; the vague smell of horses suggestive of coming wonders; the curtain that hid such gorgeous mysteries; the clean white sawdust down in the circus; the company coming in and taking their places; the fiddlers looking carelessly up at them while they tuned their instruments, as if they didn't want the play to begin, and knew it all beforehand! What a glow was that, which burst upon them all, when that long, clear, brilliant row of lights came slowly up; and what the feverish excitement when the little bell rang and the music began in good earnest, with strong parts for the drums, and sweet effects for the triangles! Well might Barbara's mother say to Kit's mother that the gallery was the place to see from, and wonder it wasn't much dearer than the boxes: well might Barbara feel doubtful whether to laugh or cry, in her flutter of delight.

Then the play itself! the horses which little Jacob believed from the first to be alive, and the ladies and gentlemen of

whose reality he could be by no means persuaded, having never seen or heard anything at all like them—the firing, which made Barbara wink—the forlorn lady, who made her cry—the tyrant, who made her tremble—the man who sang the song with the lady’s-maid and danced the chorus, who made her laugh—the pony who reared up on his hind legs when he saw the murderer, and wouldn’t hear of walking on all-fours again until he was taken into custody—the clown who ventured on such familiarities with the military man in boots—the lady who jumped over the nine-and-twenty ribbons and came down safe upon the horse’s back—everything was delightful, splendid, and surprising! Little Jacob applauded till his hands were sore; Kit cried “an-kor” at the end of everything, the three-act piece included; and Barbara’s mother beat her umbrella on the floor, in her ecstasies, until it was nearly worn down to the gingham.

In the midst of all these fascinations, Barbara’s thoughts seemed to have been still running on what Kit had said at tea-time; for, when they were coming out of the play, she asked him, with an hysterical simper, if Miss Nell was as handsome as the lady who jumped over the ribbons.

“As handsome as *her*?” said Kit. “Double as handsome.”

“Oh, Christopher! I’m sure she was the beautifullest creature ever was,” said Barbara.

“Nonsense!” returned Kit. “She was well enough, I don’t deny that; but think how she was dressed and painted, and what a difference that made. Why *you* are a good deal better-looking than her, Barbara.”

“Oh, Christopher!” said Barbara, looking down.

“You are, any day,” said Kit,—“and so’s your mother.”

Poor Barbara!

What was all this though—even all this—to the extraordinary dissipation that ensued, when Kit, walking into an

oyster-shop as bold as if he lived there, and not so much as looking at the counter or the man behind it, led his party into a box—a private box, fitted up with red curtains, white table-cloth, and cruet-stand complete—and ordered a fierce gentleman with whiskers, who acted as waiter and called him, him Christopher Nubbles, “Sir,” to bring three dozen of his largest-sized oysters, and to look sharp about it! Yes, Kit told this gentleman to look sharp, and he not only said he would look sharp, but he actually did, and presently came running back with the newest loaves, and the freshest butter, and the largest oysters ever seen. Then said Kit to this gentleman, “A pot of beer”—just so—and the gentleman, instead of replying, “Sir, did you address that language to me?” only said, “Pot o’ beer, Sir? Yes, Sir,” and went off and fetched it, and put it on the table in a small decanter-stand, like those which blind men’s dogs carry about the streets in their mouths to catch the halfpence in; and both Kit’s mother and Barbara’s mother declared as he turned away that he was one of the slimmest and gracefulest young men she had ever looked upon.

Then they fell to work upon the supper in earnest; and there was Barbara, the foolish Barbara, declaring that she could not eat more than two, and wanting more pressing than you would believe before she would eat four: though her mother and Kit’s mother made up for it pretty well, and ate and laughed and enjoyed themselves so thoroughly that it did Kit good to see them, and made him laugh and eat likewise from strong sympathy. But the greatest miracle of the night was little Jacob, who ate oysters as if he had been born and bred to the business—sprinkled the pepper and the vinegar with a discretion beyond his years—and afterwards built a grotto on the table with the shells. There was the baby too, who had never closed an eye all night,

but had sat as good as gold, trying to force a large orange into his mouth, and gazing intently at the lights in the chandelier—there he was, sitting up in his mother's lap, staring at the gas without winking, and making indentations in his soft visage with an oyster-shell, to that degree that a heart of iron must have loved him! In short, there never was a more successful supper; and when Kit ordered in a glass of something hot to finish with, and proposed Mr. and Mrs. Garland before sending it round, there were not six happier people in all the world.

CHARLES DICKENS: *The Old Curiosity Shop*

Christmas Time

"RABY HALL" was a square house, with two large, low wings. The left wing contained the kitchen, pantry, scullery, bakehouse, brewhouse, etc. The right wing the stables, coach-houses, cattle-sheds, and several bedrooms. The main building, the hall, the best bedrooms, and the double staircase, leading up to them in horse-shoe form from the hall; and behind the hall, on the ground floor, there was a morning room, in which several of the Squire's small tenants were even now preparing for supper by drinking tea, and eating cakes made in rude imitation of the infant Saviour. On the right of the hall were the two drawing-rooms *en suite*, and on the left was the remarkable room, into which the host now handed Miss Carden, and Mr. Coventry followed. This room had originally been the banqueting-hall. It was about twenty feet high, twenty-eight feet wide, and fifty feet long, and ended in an enormous bay window, that opened upon the lawn. It was entirely panelled in oak,

carved by old Flemish workmen, and adorned here and there with bold devices. The oak, having grown old in a pure atmosphere, and in a district where wood and roots were generally burned in dining-rooms, had acquired a very rich and beautiful colour, a pure and healthy reddish brown, with no tinge whatever of black: a mighty different hue from any you can find in Wardour Street. Plaster ceiling there was none, and never had been. The original joists and beams and boards were still there, only not quite so rudely fashioned as of old; for Mr. Raby's grandfather had caused them to be planed and varnished, and gilded a little in serpentine lilies. This woodwork above gave nobility to the room, and its gilding, though worn, relieved the eye agreeably.

The farther end was used as a study, and one side of it graced with books, all handsomely bound; the other side with a very beautiful organ, that had an oval mirror in the midst of its gilt dummy pipes. All this made a cosy nook in the grand room.

What might be called the dining-room part, though rich, was rather sombre on ordinary occasions; but this night it was decorated gloriously. The materials were simple wax-candles and holly; the effect was produced by a magnificent use of these materials. There were eighty candles of the largest size sold in shops, and twelve wax pillars, five feet high, and the size of a man's calf; of these, four only were lighted at present. The holly was not in sprigs, but in enormous branches, that filled the eye with glistening green and red; and in the embrasure of the front window stood a young holly-tree entire, eighteen feet high, and gorgeous with five hundred branches of red berries. The tree had been dug up, and planted here in an enormous bucket, used for that purpose, and filled with mould.

Close behind this tree were placed two of the wax pillars, lighted, and their flame shone through the leaves and berries magically.

As Miss Carden entered, on Mr. Raby's arm, her eye swept the room with complacency, and settled on the holly-tree. At sight of that, she pinched Mr. Raby's arm and cried "Oh!" three times. Then, ignoring the dinner-table altogether, she pulled her host away to the tree, and stood before it with clasped hands. "Oh, how beautiful!"

Mr. Raby was gratified. "So then our forefathers were not quite such fools as some people say."

"They were angels, they were ducks. It is beautiful, it is divine."

Mr. Raby looked at the glowing cheek and deep, sparkling sapphire eye. "Come," said he; "after all there's nothing here so beautiful as the young lady who now honours the place with her presence."

With this, he handed her ceremoniously to a place at his right hand; said a short grace, and sat down between his two guests.

At about eight o'clock a servant announced candles in the drawing-room.

Upon this Mr. Raby rose, and without giving Grace any option on the matter, handed her to the door with obsolete deference.

In the drawing-room she found a harpsichord, a spinet, and a piano, all tuned expressly for her. This amused her, as she had never seen either of the two older instruments in her life. She played on them all three. . . .

Tea and coffee came directly afterwards, and ere they were disposed of, a servant announced "The Wassailers."

"Well, let them come in," said Mr. Raby.

The schoolchildren and young people of the village trooped in and made their obeisances, and sang the Christmas Carol—

“God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay.”

Then one of the party produced an image of the Virgin and Child, and another offered comfits in a box; a third presented the wassail cup, into which Raby immediately poured some silver, and Coventry followed his example. Grace fumbled for her purse, and, when she had found it, began to fumble in it for her silver.

But Raby lost all patience, and said, “There, I give this for the lady, and she’ll pay me *next Christmas*.”

The wassailers departed, and the Squire went to say a kind word to his humbler guests. . . .

It was nearly eleven o’clock when Mr. Raby rejoined them, and they all went in to supper. There were candles lighted on the table and a few here and there upon the walls; but the room was very sombre; and Mr. Raby informed them this was to remind them of the moral darkness in which the world lay before that great event they were about to celebrate.

He then helped each of them to a ladleful of frumety, remarking at the same time, with a grim smile, that they were not obliged to eat it; there would be a very different supper after midnight.

Then a black-letter Bible was brought him, and he read it all to himself at a side table.

After an interval of silence so passed, there was a gentle tap at the bay window. Mr. Raby went and threw it open, and immediately a woman’s voice, clear and ringing, sang outside—

"The first Noel the angels did say,
 Was to three poor shepherds in fields as they lay
 In fields where they were keeping their sheep
 On a cold winter's night that was so deep."

Chorus—"Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
 Born is the King of Israel."

.

As the Noel proceeded, some came in at the window, others at the doors, and the lower part of the room began to fill with singers and auditors.

The Noel ended, there was a silence, during which the organ was opened, the bellows blown, and a number of servants and others came into the room with little lighted tapers, and stood in a long row, awaiting a signal from the Squire.

He took out his watch and, finding it was close on twelve o'clock, directed the doors to be flung open, that he might hear the great clock in the hall strike the quarters.

The clock struck the first quarter—dead silence; the second—the third—dead silence.

But at the fourth, and with the first stroke of midnight, out burst the full organ and fifty voices, with the "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*"; and, as that divine hymn surged on, the lighters ran along the walls and lighted the eighty candles, and, for the first time, the twelve waxen pillars, so that, as the hymn concluded, the room was in a blaze, and it was Christmas Day.

CHARLES READE: *Put Yourself in His Place*

Entertaining

FOR some time Mrs. Proudie was much at a loss to know by what sort of party or entertainment she would make

herself famous. Balls and suppers were of course out of the question. She did not object to her daughters dancing all night at other houses—at least, of late she had not objected, for the fashionable world required it, and the young ladies had perhaps a will of their own—but dancing at her house—absolutely under the shade of the bishop's apron—would be a sin and a scandal. And then as to suppers—of all modes in which one may extend one's hospitality to a large acquaintance, they are the most costly. "It is horrid to think that we should go out among our friends for the mere sake of eating and drinking," Mrs. Proudie would say to the clergymen's wives from Barsetshire. "It shows such a sensual propensity."

"Indeed it does, Mrs. Proudie; and is so vulgar too!" those ladies would reply. But the elder among them would remember with regret, the unsparing, open-handed hospitality of Barchester Palace in the good old days of Bishop Grantly—God rest his soul! One old vicar's wife there was whose answer had not been so courteous—

"When we are hungry, Mrs. Proudie," she had said, "we do all have sensual propensities."

"It would be much better, Mrs. Athill, if the world would provide for all that at home," Mrs. Proudie had rapidly replied; with which opinion I must here profess that I cannot by any means bring myself to coincide. But a *conversazione* would give play to no sensual propensity, nor occasion that intolerable expense which the gratification of sensual propensities too often produces. Mrs. Proudie felt that the word was not all that she could have desired. It was a little faded by old use and present oblivion, and seemed to address itself to that portion of the London world that is considered blue, rather than fashionable. But, nevertheless, there was a spirituality about it which suited her, and one may also say

an economy. And then as regarded fashion, it might perhaps not be beyond the power of a Mrs. Proudie to regild the word with a newly burnished gilding. Some leading person must produce fashion at first hand, and why not Mrs. Proudie?

Her plan was to set the people by the ears talking, if talk they would, or to induce them to show themselves there inert if no more could be got from them. To accommodate with chairs and sofas as many as the furniture of her noble suite of rooms would allow, especially with the two chairs and padded bench against the wall in the back closet—the small inner drawing-room, as she would call it to the clergymen's wives from Barsetshire—and to let the others stand about upright, or "group themselves" as she described it. Then four times during the two-hours period of her *conversazione* tea and cake were to be handed round on salvers. It is astonishing how far a very little cake will go in this way, particularly if administered tolerably early after dinner. The men can't eat it, and the women having no plates and no table, are obliged to abstain. Mrs. Jones knows that she cannot hold a piece of crumbly cake in her hand till it be consumed without doing serious injury to her best dress. When Mrs. Proudie, with her weekly books before her, looked into the financial upshot of her *conversazione*, her conscience told her that she had done the right thing.

. . . Lord Dumbello was at Mrs. Proudie's, and it did so come to pass that Griselda was seated at the corner of a sofa close to which was a vacant space in which his lordship could—"group himself." They had not been long there before Lord Dumbello did group himself. "Fine day," he said, coming up and occupying the vacant space by Miss Grantly's elbow.

"We were driving to-day, and we thought it rather cold," said Griselda.

"Deuced cold," said Lord Dumbello, and then he adjusted his white cravat and touched up his whiskers. Having got so far, he did not proceed to any other immediate conversational efforts; nor did Griselda. But he grouped himself again as became a marquis, and gave very intense satisfaction to Mrs. Proudie.

"This is so kind of you, Lord Dumbello," said that lady, coming up to him and shaking his hand warmly; "so very kind of you to come to my poor little tea-party."

"Uncommonly pleasant, I call it," said his lordship. "I like this sort of thing—no trouble, you know."

"No; that is the charm of it: isn't it? no trouble, or fuss, or parade. That's what I always say. According to my ideas, society consists in giving people facility for an interchange of thoughts—what we call conversation."

"Aw, yes, exactly."

"Not in eating and drinking together—eh, Lord Dumbello? And yet the practice of our lives would seem to show that the indulgence of those animal propensities can alone suffice to bring people together. The world in this has surely made a great mistake."

"I like a good dinner all the same," said Lord Dumbello.

"Oh yes, of course—of course. I am by no means one of those who would pretend to preach that our tastes have not been given to us for our enjoyment. Why should things be nice if we are not to like them?"

"A man who can really give a good dinner has learned a great deal," said Lord Dumbello, with unusual animation.

"An immense deal. It is quite an art in itself: and one which I, at any rate, by no means despise. But we cannot always be eating—can we?"

"No," said Lord Dumbello, "not always." And he looked as though he lamented that his powers should be so circumscribed. And then Mrs. Proudie passed on to Mrs. Grantly. The two ladies were quite friendly in London; though down in their own neighbourhood they waged a war so internecine in its nature. But nevertheless Mrs. Proudie's manner might have showed to a very close observer that she knew the difference between a bishop and an archdeacon. "I am so delighted to see you," said she. "No, don't mind moving; I won't sit down just at present. But why didn't the archdeacon come?"

"It was quite impossible; it was indeed," said Mrs. Grantly. "The archdeacon never has a moment in London that he can call his own."

"You don't stay up very long, I believe."

"A good deal longer than we either of us like, I can assure you. London life is a perfect nuisance to me."

"But people in a certain position must go through with it, you know," said Mrs. Proudie. "The bishop, for instance, must attend the House."

"Must he?" asked Mrs. Grantly, as though she were not at all well informed with reference to this branch of a bishop's business. "I am very glad that archdeacons are under no such liability."

"Oh no; there's nothing of that sort," said Mrs. Proudie, very seriously. "But how uncommonly well Miss Grantly is looking! I do hear that she has been quite admired." This phrase certainly was a little hard for the mother to bear. All the world had acknowledged, so Mrs. Grantly had taught herself to believe, that Griselda was undoubtedly the beauty of the season. Marquises and lords were already contending for her smile, and paragraphs had been written in newspapers as to her profile. It was too hard to be told, after that,

that her daughter had been "quite admired." Such a phrase might suit a pretty little red-cheeked milkmaid of a girl.

"She cannot, of course, come near your girls in that respect," said Mrs. Grantly, very quietly. Now the Miss Proudies had not enlisted from the fashionable world any very loud encomiums on their beauty. Their mother felt the taunt in its fullest force, but she would not essay to do battle on the present arena. She jotted down the item in her mind, and kept it over for Barchester and the chapter. Such debts as those she usually paid on some day, if the means of doing so were at all within her power. "But there is Miss Dunstable, I declare," she said, seeing that that lady had entered the room; and away went Mrs. Proudie to welcome her distinguished guest.

"And so this is a *conversazione*, is it?" said that lady, speaking, as usual, not in a suppressed voice. "Well, I declare, it's very nice. It means conversation, don't it, Mrs. Proudie?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Miss Dunstable, there is nobody like you, I declare."

"Well, but don't it? and tea and cake? and then, when we're tired of talking we go away,—isn't that it?"

"But you must not be tired for these three hours yet."

"Oh, I am never tired of talking; all the world knows that. How do, bishop? A very nice sort of thing this *conversazione*, isn't it now?" The bishop rubbed his hands together and smiled, and said he thought it was rather nice.

"Mrs. Proudie is so fortunate in all her little arrangements," said Miss Dunstable.

"Yes, yes," said the bishop, "I think she is happy in these matters. I do flatter myself that she is so. Of course, Miss Dunstable, you are accustomed to things on a much grander scale."

"I! Lord bless you, no! Nobody hates grandeur so much as I do. Of course I must do as I am told. I must live in a big house, and have three footmen six feet high. I must have a coachman with a top-heavy wig, and horses so big that they frighten me. If I did not, I should be made out a lunatic and declared unable to manage my own affairs. But as for grandeur, I hate it. I certainly think that I shall have some of these conversaziones. I wonder if Mrs. Proudie will come and put me up to a wrinkle or two." The bishop again rubbed his hands, and said that he was sure she would. He never felt quite at his ease with Miss Dunstable, as he rarely could ascertain whether or no she was in earnest in what she was saying. So he trotted off, muttering some excuse as he went, and Miss Dunstable chuckled with an inward chuckle at his too evident bewilderment.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE: *Framley Parsonage*

A Girls' School

. . . I PASSED from compartment to compartment, from passage to passage, of a large and irregular building; till, emerging from the total and somewhat dreary silence pervading that portion of the house we had traversed, we came upon the hum of many voices, and presently entered a wide, long room, with great deal tables, two at each end, on each of which burnt a pair of candles, and seated all round on benches a congregation of girls of every age, from nine or ten to twenty. Seen by the dim light of the dips, their number to me appeared countless, though not in reality exceeding eighty; they were uniformly dressed in brown stuff frocks of quaint fashion, and long holland pinafores. It was the hour

of study; they were engaged in conning over to-morrow's task, and the hum I had heard was the combined result of their whispered repetitions.

Miss Miller signed to me to sit on a bench near the door, then walking up to the top of the long room, she cried out,—
“Monitors, collect the lesson-books and put them away!”

Four tall girls arose from different tables, and going round, gathered the books and removed them. Miss Miller again gave the word of command,—

“Monitors, fetch the supper-trays!”

The tall girls went out and returned presently, each bearing a tray, with portions of something, I knew not what, arranged thereon, and a pitcher of water and mug in the middle of each tray. The portions were handed round; those who liked took a draught of the water, the mug being common to all. When it came to my turn, I drank, for I was thirsty, but did not touch the food, excitement and fatigue rendering me incapable of eating: I saw now, however, that it was a thin oaten cake, shared into fragments.

The meal over, prayers were read by Miss Miller, and the classes filed off two and two, upstairs. Overpowered by this time with weariness, I scarcely noticed what sort of a place the bedroom was; except that like the school-room, I saw it was very long. To-night I was to be Miss Miller's bed-fellow; she helped me to undress: when laid down I glanced at the long rows of beds, each of which was quickly filled with two occupants; in ten minutes the single light was extinguished; amid silence and complete darkness, I fell asleep.

The night passed rapidly: I was too tired even to dream; I only once awoke to hear the wind rave in furious gusts, and the rain fall in torrents, and to be sensible that Miss Miller had taken her place by my side. When I again un-

closed my eyes, a loud bell was ringing: the girls were up and dressing; day had not yet begun to dawn, and a rush-light or two burnt in the room. I too rose reluctantly; it was bitter cold, and I dressed as well as I could for shivering, and washed when there was a basin at liberty, which did not occur soon, as there was but one basin to six girls, on the stands down the middle of the room. Again the bell rang: all formed in file, two and two, and in that order descended the stairs and entered the cold and dimly lit school-room: here prayers were read by Miss Miller; afterwards she called out:—

“Form classes!”

A great tumult succeeded for some minutes, during which Miss Miller repeatedly exclaimed, “Silence!” and “Order!” When it subsided, I saw them all drawn up in four semi-circles, before four chairs, placed at the four tables; all held books in their hands, and a great book, like a Bible, lay on each table, before the vacant seat. A pause of some seconds succeeded, filled up by the low, vague hum of numbers: Miss Miller walked from class to class, hushing this indefinite sound.

A distant bell tinkled: immediately three ladies entered the room, each walked to a table and took her seat; Miss Miller assumed the fourth vacant chair, which was that nearest the door, and around which the smallest of the children were assembled: to this inferior class I was called, and placed at the bottom of it.

Business now began: the day’s Collect was repeated, then certain texts of Scripture were said, and to these succeeded a protracted reading of chapters in the Bible, which lasted an hour. By the time that exercise had terminated, day had fully dawned. The indefatigable bell now sounded for the fourth time; the classes were marshalled and marched into another

room for breakfast: how glad I was to behold a prospect of getting something to eat! I was now nearly sick from inanition, having taken so little the day before.

The refectory was a great, low-ceilinged, gloomy room; on two long tables smoked basins of something hot, which, however, to my dismay, sent out an odour far from inviting. I saw a universal manifestation of discontent when the fumes of the repast met the nostrils of those destined to swallow it; from the van of the procession, the tall girls of the first class, the whispered words:—

“Disgusting! The porridge is burnt again!”

“Silence!” ejaculated a voice, not that of Miss Miller, but one of the upper teachers, a little and dark personage, smartly dressed, but of somewhat morose aspect. . . . A long grace was said and a hymn sung; then a servant brought in some tea for the teachers, and the meal began.

Ravenous, and now very faint, I devoured a spoonful or two of my portion without thinking of its taste; but the first edge of hunger blunted, I perceived I had got in hand a nauseous mess: burnt porridge is almost as bad as rotten potatoes; famine itself soon sickens over it. The spoons were moved slowly: I saw each girl taste her food and try to swallow it; but in most cases the effort was soon relinquished. Breakfast was over, and none had breakfasted. Thanks being returned for what we had not got, and a second hymn chanted, the refectory was evacuated for the school-room. I was one of the last to go out, and in passing the tables, I saw one teacher take a basin of the porridge and taste it; she looked at the others; all their countenances expressed displeasure, and one of them, the stout one, whispered:—

“Abominable stuff! How shameful!”

A quarter of an hour passed before lessons began again, during which the school-room was in a glorious tumult; for

that space of time, it seemed to be permitted to talk loud and more freely, and they used their privilege. The whole conversation ran on the breakfast, which one and all abused roundly. Poor things! it was the sole consolation they had. . . .

A clock in the school-room struck nine; Miss Miller left her circle, and standing in the middle of the room, cried:—

“Silence! To your seats!”

Discipline prevailed: in five minutes the confused throng was resolved into order, and comparative silence quelled the Babel clamour of tongues. The upper teachers now punctually resumed their posts: but still, all seemed to wait. Ranged on benches down the sides of the room, the eighty girls sat motionless and erect: a quaint assemblage they appeared, all with plain locks combed from their faces, not a curl visible; in brown dresses, made high and surrounded by a narrow tucker about the throat, with little pockets of holland (shaped something like a highlander’s purse) tied in front of their frocks, and designed to serve the purpose of a work-bag: all too wearing woollen stockings and country-made shoes, fastened with brass buckles. Above twenty of those clad in this costume, were full-grown girls, or rather young women; it suited them ill, and gave an air of oddity even to the prettiest.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE: *Jane Eyre*

Unwelcome Guests

THE Baronet was passing with a lady from the drawing-room to the conservatory. He started as the tones of Mr. Gudge’s voice reached him; but directly recognising them, he hur-

riedly found a seat for his companion, frowned, and bit his lip until the blood almost started from it; and then, directly assuming a smiling face, came to the door.

"So, Mr. Gudge, you've got here at last, I see," he said.

"Yes, Sir Frederick; all right—right as twenty trivets and ninepence on the top of 'em. But there wouldn't have been a chance of getting much further, if I hadn't caught you. What am I to do with my horse?"

"Well, I really don't know, Mr. Gudge. I am afraid we cannot accommodate you; and you see, my servants are occupied."

"Ah," said Mr. Gudge; "so they are. There's not so many at leisure to help as the night we set off from Chester; is there, Sir Frederick?"

"Binns," exclaimed the Baronet, hastily, "let Davis take the horse round."

"How d'ye do, Sir Frederick," exclaimed Mr. Gudge as he entered the hall; "all right, eh?" putting out his large hand to the Baronet.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Gudge," replied the host, extending the tips of his fingers. And then he added: "Excuse me half a minute. I shall see you presently."

And as the man came forward to the horse's head, Mr. and Mrs. Gudge alighted, and allowed the string of carriages that had collected behind them to come on.

"Well," said Mrs. Gudge, "what's to be done now? There's no young woman to take anything. Where's my calash to go, Gudge? And that umbrella ought never to be left in the phaeton a night like this."

"Bother!" was the reply. For Mr. Gudge was evidently annoyed, and when he was so, his temper kept its heat as long as a jam-tart.

"Bother!" he replied. "Here, shove it under the billiard-table; nobody will hurt it there. Stop a bit; wait till I've got my glove on. Ah, there it goes; that comes of your eighteen-pennys. Never mind, I'll hold it in my hand."

And then, having used his handkerchief, with a noise like an ophicleide, and brushed up his hair, he was announced, and entered the drawing-room.

Lady Arden was talking to some of her visitors—one or two she particularly looked up to; and would rather that every one else in the world but these had seen the arrival of the Gudges. But there was no help for this; so she bowed, very distantly, and then went on with her conversation. But Mr. Gudge was not so easily shaken off.

"Uncommon pretty, to be sure, my lady," he exclaimed, as he gazed about him; "quite bangs Vauxhall, as the saying is. And no shilling plates of ham, I'll be bound. No, no; we all know Sir F. does the right thing when he does do it, eh!"

Mr. Gudge finished with a pleasant laugh, in which nobody joined. Poor Lady Arden would have rejoiced at an earthquake, and was ready to faint; whilst Mrs. Gudge was fanning herself violently, from mingled heat and indignation at the suspicion that she was not paid all the respect that her cherry-satin entitled her to.

Fortunately there was a little diversion to the position of things, as the company thronged round the piano, where John Parry was going to sing. Mr. Gudge immediately elbowed his way through them, and dragging his wife after him, got close to the instrument, which the talented buffo was turning into a more singular speaking machine than any others ever invented.

"Good again!" said Mr. Gudge, as he rapped the sounding-board when any clever effect came out; and then looked

round on the company that they might coincide with his approbation.

"First rate, Tootsy, isn't it, and no mistake?"

"Umph!" said Mrs. Gudge. "There wasn't a soul asked me so much as to have a cup of tea. Call that breeding?—I never see such breeding! Pah!"

She was evidently not in a state of mind to enjoy anything. Meanwhile, the song concluded, and a low murmur of applause ran round the circle, which was interrupted by Mr. Gudge's warmth of commendation. Clapping his ungloved hands together, he cried out,

"Bravo! Parry! Oncore! Oncore! He always sings another, you know,—Oncore! If I might presume, you don't happen to know 'When we went out a-shooting,' do you?"

John Parry smiled, and shook his head; he regretted his *repertoire* was deficient as respected the wished-for song.

"Ah! it's a capital good one," said Mr. Gudge; "just the thing for you, with all your hankey-pankey work on the music; you should get it."

"Come, Parry," observed Sir Frederick, coming to the rescue, and seizing him by the arm: "you must take some refreshment after that. I've sent a cool bottle of claret into the kiosk. I think Lady Arden is there, and one or two nice persons I wish you to know."

ALBERT SMITH: *The Life and Adventures of
Christopher Tadpole*

The Tailor's

As I passed through Covent Garden, a pretty young woman stopped me under a gas-lamp. I was pushing on when I saw

it was Jemmy Downes's Irish wife, and saw, too, that she did not recognise me. A sudden instinct made me stop and hear what she had to say.

"Shure, thin, and ye're a tailor, my young man?"

"Yes," I said, nettled a little that my late loathed profession still betrayed itself in my gait.

"From the country?"

I nodded, though I dared not speak a white lie to that effect. . . .

"Ye'll be wanting work, thin?"

"I have no work."

"Och, thin, it's I can show ye the flower o' work, I can. Bedad, there's a shop I know of where ye'll earn—bedad, if ye're the ninth part of a man, let alone a handy young fellow like the looks of you—och, ye'll earn thirty shillings the week, to the very least—an' beautiful lodgings; och, thin, just come and see 'em—as chape as mother's milk! . . ."

The fancy still possessed me; and I went with her through one dingy back street after another. She seemed to be purposely taking an indirect road, to mislead me as to my whereabouts; but after a half-hour's walking, I knew, as well as she, that we were in one of the most miserable slop-working nests of the East-end.

She stopped at a house door, and hurried me in, up to the first floor, and into a dirty parlour, smelling infamously of gin; where the first object I beheld was Jemmy Downes, sitting before the fire, three-parts drunk, with a couple of dirty, squalling children on the hearthrug, whom he was kicking and cuffing alternately.

"Och, thin, ye villain, beating the poor darlints whinever I lave ye a minute." And pouring out a volley of Irish curses, she caught up the urchins, one under each arm, and kissed

and hugged them till they were nearly choked. "Och, ye plague o' my life—as drunk as a baste; an' I brought home this darlint of a young gentleman to help ye in the business."

Downes got up, and steadying himself by the table, leered at me with lacklustre eyes, and attempted a little ceremonious politeness. How this was to end I did not see; but I was determined to carry it through. . . .

"An' I've told him thirty shillings a week's the least he'll earn; and charge for board and lodgings only seven shillings."

"Thirty!—she lies; she's always a-lying; don't you mind her. Five-and-forty is the werry lowest figure. Ask my respectable and most pious partner, Shemei Solomons. Why, blow me—it's Locke!"

"Yes, it is Locke; and surely you're my old friend Jemmy Downes? Shake hands. What an unexpected pleasure to meet you again!"

"Werry unexpected pleasure. Tip us your daddle! . . . Take a caulker? Summat heavy, then? No? 'Tak a drap o' kindness yet, for auld langsyne?'"

"You forget I was always a teetotaller."

"Ay," with a look of unfeigned pity. "An' you're a-going to lend us a hand? oh, ah! perhaps you'd like to begin? Here's a most beautiful uniform, now, for a markis in her Majesty's Guards; we don't mention names—tarn't business-like. P'r'aps you'd like best to work here to-night, for company—'for auld langsyne, my boys'; and I'll introduce you to the gents upstairs to-morrow."

"No," I said; "I'll go up at once, if you've no objection."

"Och, thin, but the sheets isn't aired—no—faix; and I'm thinking the gentleman as is a-going isn't gone yet."

But I insisted on going up at once; and, grumbling, she followed me. I stopped on the landing of the second floor,

and asked which way; and seeing her in no hurry to answer, opened a door, inside which I heard the hum of many voices, saying in as sprightly a tone as I could muster, that I supposed that was the workroom.

As I had expected, a fetid, choking den, with just room enough in it for seven or eight sallow, starved beings, who, coatless, shoeless, and ragged, sat stitching, each on his truckle-bed. I glanced round; the man whom I sought was not there.

My heart fell; why it had ever risen to such a pitch of hope I cannot tell; and half-cursing myself for a fool, in thus wildly thrusting my head into a squabble, I turned back and shut the door, saying—

“A very pleasant room, ma’am, but a leetle too crowded.”

Before she could answer, the opposite door opened; and a face appeared—unwashed, unshaven, shrunk to a skeleton. I did not recognise it at first.

“Blessed Vargen! but that wasn’t your voice, Locke?”

“And who are you?”

“Tear and ages! and he don’t know Mike Kelly!”

My first impulse was to catch him up in my arms and run downstairs with him. I controlled myself, however, not knowing how far he might be in his tyrant’s power. But his voluble Irish heart burst out at once—

“Oh! blessed saints, take me out o’ this! take me out for the love of Jesus! take me out o’ this hell, or I’ll go mad intirely! Och! will nobody have pity on poor sowls in purgatory—here in prison like negur slaves? We’re starved to the bone, we are, and kilt intirely with cowl’d.”

And as he clutched my arm, with his long, skinny, trembling fingers, I saw that his hands and feet were all chapped and bleeding. Neither shoe nor stocking did he possess; his only garments were a ragged shirt and trousers; and—in

horrible mockery of his own misery, a grand new flowered satin vest, which to-morrow was to figure in some gorgeous shop-window!

"Och! Mother of Heaven!" he went on, wildly, "when will I get out to the fresh air? For five months I haven't seen the blessed light of sun, nor spoken to the praste, nor ate a bit o' mate, barring bread-and-butter. Shure, it's all the blessed Sabbaths and saints' days I've been working like a haythen Jew, an' niver seen the insides o' the chapel to confess my sins, and me poor sowl's lost intirely—and they've pawned the relaver this fifteen weeks, and not a boy of us iver sot foot in the street since."

"Vot's that row?" roared at this juncture Downes's voice from below.

"Och, thin," shrieked the woman, "here's that thief o' the warld, Micky Kelly, slandhering o' us afore the blessed heaven, and he owing £2 : 14 : 0½ for his board an' lodging, let alone pawn-tickets, and goin' to rin away, the black-hearted, ongrateful sarpent!" And she began yelling indiscriminately, "Thieves!" "Murder!" "Blasphemy!" and other such ejaculations, which (the English ones at least) had not the slightest reference to the matter in hand.

"I'll come to him!" said Downes, with an oath, and rushed stumbling up the stairs, while the poor wretch sneaked in again, and slammed the door to. Downes battered at it, but was met with a volley of curses from the men inside; while, profiting by the Babel, I blew out the light, ran downstairs, and got safe into the street.

In two hours afterwards, Mackaye, Porter, Crossthwaite and I were at the door, accompanied by a policeman, and a search-warrant.

At the Fair

SADDENED by this conversation, which had helped to give another shake to the easy-going complacency with which Lancelot had been used to contemplate the world below him, and look on its evils as necessities, ancient and fixed as the universe, he entered the village fair, and was a little disappointed at his first glimpse of the village-green. Certainly his expectations had not been very exalted; but there had run through them a hope of something melodramatic, dreams of May-pole dancing and athletic games, somewhat of village-belle rivalry, of the Corin and Sylvia school; or, failing that, a few Touchstones and Audreys, some genial earnest buffo humour here and there. But there did not seem much likelihood of it. Two or three apple and gingerbread stalls, from which draggled children were turning slowly and wistfully away to go home; a booth full of trumpery fairings, in front of which tawdry girls were coaxing maudlin youths, with faded southernwood in their button-holes; another long low booth, from every crevice of which reeked odours of stale beer and smoke, by courtesy denominated tobacco, to the treble accompaniment of a jigging fiddle and tambourine, and the bass one of grumbled oaths and curses within—these were the means of relaxation which the piety, freedom and civilisation of fourteen centuries, from Hengist to Queen Victoria, had devised and made possible for the English peasant!

“There seems very little here to see,” said Lancelot, half peevishly.

“I think, sir,” quoth Tregarva, “that very thing is what’s most worth seeing.”

Lancelot could not help, even at the risk of detection, investing capital in sugar-plums and gingerbread, to furnish

the urchins around with the material for a whole carnival of stomach-aches; and he felt a great inclination to clear the fairing-stall in a like manner, on behalf of the poor bedizened sickly-looking girls round, but he was afraid of the jealousy of some beer-bemuddled swain. The ill looks of the young girls surprised him much. Here and there smiled a plump rosy face enough; but the majority seemed under-sized, under-fed, utterly wanting in grace, vigour, and what the penny-a-liners call "rude health." He remarked it to Tregarva. The keeper smiled mournfully.

"You see those little creatures dragging home babies in arms nearly as big as themselves, sir. That, and bad food, want of milk especially, accounts for their growing up no bigger than they do; and as for their sad countenances, sir, most of them must carry a lighter conscience before they carry a brighter face."

"What do you mean?" asked Lancelot.

"The clergyman who enters the weddings and the baptisms knows well enough what I mean, sir. But we'll go into that booth if you want to see the thick of it, sir; that's to say, if you're not ashamed."

"I hope we need neither of us do anything to be ashamed of there; and as for seeing, I begin to agree with you, that what makes the whole thing most curious is its intense dullness."

"What upon earth is this?"

"I say, look out there!"

"Well, you look out yourself!"

This was caused by a violent blow across the shins with a thick stick, the deed of certain drunken wiseacres who were persisting in playing in the dark the never very lucrative game of three sticks a penny, conducted by a couple of gipsies. Poor fellows! there was one excuse for them. It was

the only thing there to play at, except a set of skittles; and on those they had lost their money every Saturday night for the last seven years each at his own village beer-shop.

So into the booth they turned; and as soon as Lancelot's eyes were accustomed to the reeking atmosphere, he saw seated at two long temporary tables of board, fifty or sixty of "My Brethren," as clergymen call them in their sermons, wrangling, stupid, beery, with sodden eyes and drooping lips—interspersed with more girls and brazen-faced women, with dirty flowers in their caps, whose whole business seemed to be to cast jealous looks at each other, and defend themselves from the coarse overtures of their swains.

Lancelot had been already perfectly astonished at the foulness of the language which prevailed; and the utter absence of anything like chivalrous respect, almost of common decency, towards women. But lo! the language of the elder women was quite as disgusting as that of the men, if not worse. He whispered a remark on the point to Tregarva, who shook his head.

"It's the field work, sir—the field work, that does it all. They get accustomed there from their childhood to hear words whose very meanings they shouldn't know; and the elder teach the younger ones, and the married ones are worst of all. It wears them out in body, sir, that field work, and makes them brutes in soul and in manners."

"Why don't they give it up? Why don't the respectable ones set their faces against it?"

"They can't afford it, sir. They must go a-field, or go hungered, most of them. And they get to like the gossip and scandal, and coarse fun of it, while their children are left at home to play in the roads, or fall into the fire, as plenty do every year."

“Why not at school?”

“The big ones are kept at home, sir, to play at nursing those little ones who are too young to go. Oh, sir,” he added, in a tone of deep feeling, “it is very little of a father’s care, or a mother’s love, that a labourer’s child knows in these days!”

Sadder and sadder, Lancelot tried to listen to the conversation of the men round him. To his astonishment he hardly understood a word of it. It was half articulate, nasal, guttural, made up almost entirely of vowels, like the speech of savages. He had never before been struck with the significant contrast between the sharp, clearly-defined articulation, the vivid and varied tones of the gentleman, or even of the London street-boy when compared with the coarse, half-formed growls, as of a company of seals, which he heard round him. That single fact struck him, perhaps, more deeply than any; it connected itself with many of his physiological fancies; it was the parent of many thoughts and plans of his after-life. Here and there he could distinguish a half-sentence. An old shrunken man opposite him was drawing figures in the spilt beer with his pipe-stem, and discoursing of the glorious times before the great war, “when there was more food than there were mouths, and more work than there were hands.” “Poor human nature!” thought Lancelot, as he tried to follow one of those unintelligible discussions about the relative prices of the loaf and the bushel of flour, which ended, as usual, in more swearing, and more quarrelling, and more beer to make it up—“Poor human nature! always looking back, as the German sage says, to some fancied golden age, never looking forward to the real one which is coming!”

CHARLES KINGSLEY: *Yeast*

Landlord and Tenant

"WHAT a fine old kitchen this is!" said Mr. Donnithorne, looking round admiringly. He always spoke in the same deliberate, well-chiselled, polite way, whether his words were sugary or venomous. "And you keep it so exquisitely clean, Mrs. Poyser. I like these premises, do you know, beyond any on the estate."

"Well, sir, since you're fond of 'em, I should be glad if you'd let a bit o' repairs be done to 'em, for the boarding's i' that state, as we're likely to be eaten up wi' rats and mice; and the cellar, you may stan' up to your knees i' water in't, if you like to go down; but perhaps you'd rather believe my words. Won't you please to sit down, sir?"

"Not yet; I must see your dairy. I have not seen it for years, and I hear on all hands about your fine cheese and butter," said the Squire, looking politely unconscious that there could be any question on which he and Mrs. Poyser might happen to disagree. "I think I see the door open, there; you must not be surprised if I cast a covetous eye on your cream and butter. I don't expect that Mrs. Satchell's cream and butter will bear comparison with yours."

"I can't say, sir, I'm sure. It's seldom I see other folks' butter, though there's some on it as there's no need to see—the smell's enough."

"Ah, now this I like," said Mr. Donnithorne, looking round at the damp temple of cleanliness, but keeping near the door. "I'm sure I should like my breakfast better if I knew the butter and cream came from this dairy. Thank you, that really is a pleasant sight. Unfortunately, my slight tendency to rheumatism makes me afraid of damp; I'll sit down in your comfortable kitchen. Ah, Poyser, how do you do? In the midst of business, I see, as usual. I've been looking

at your wife's beautiful dairy—the best manager in the parish, is she not?"

Mr. Poyser had just entered in his shirt-sleeves and open waistcoat, with a face a shade redder than usual, from the exertion of "pitching." As he stood, red, rotund, and radiant, before the small, wiry, cool old gentleman, he looked like a prize apple by the side of a withered crab.

"Will you please to take this chair, sir?" he said, lifting his father's arm-chair forward a little: "you'll find it easy."

"No, thank you, I never sit in easy-chairs," said the old gentleman, seating himself on a small chair near the door. "Do you know, Mrs. Poyser—sit down, pray, both of you—I've been far from contented, for some time, with Mrs. Satchell's dairy management. I think she has not a good method, as you have."

"Indeed, sir, I can't speak to that," said Mrs. Poyser, in a hard voice, rolling and unrolling her knitting, and looking icily out of the window, as she continued to stand opposite the Squire. Poyser might sit down if he liked, she thought: *she* wasn't going to sit down, as if she'd give in to any such smooth-tongued palaver. Mr. Poyser, who looked and felt the reverse of icy, did sit down in his three-cornered chair.

"And now, Poyser, as Satchell is laid up, I am intending to let the Chase Farm to a respectable tenant. I'm tired of having a farm on my own hands—nothing is made the best of in such cases, as you know. A satisfactory bailiff is hard to find; and I think you and I, Poyser, and your excellent wife here, can enter into a little arrangement in consequence, which will be to our mutual advantage."

"Oh," said Mr. Poyser, with a good-natured blankness of imagination as to the nature of the arrangement.

"If I'm called upon to speak, sir," said Mrs. Poyser, after

glancing at her husband with pity at his softness, "you know better than me; but I don't see what Chase Farm is t' us—we've cumber enough wi' our own farm. Not but what I'm glad to hear o' anybody respectable coming into the parish: there's some as ha' been brought in as hasn't been looked on i' that character."

"You're likely to find Mr. Thurle an excellent neighbour, I assure you: such a one as you will feel glad to have accommodated by the little plan I'm going to mention; especially as I hope you will find it as much to your own advantage as his."

"Indeed, sir, if it's anything to our advantage, it'll be the first offer o' the sort I've heard on. It's them as takes advantage that get advantage i' this world, *I* think: folks have to wait long enough afore it's brought to 'em."

"The fact is, Poyser," said the Squire, ignoring Mrs. Poyser's theory of worldly prosperity, "there is too much dairy land, and too little plough land, on the Chase Farm, to suit Thurle's purpose—indeed he will only take the farm on condition of some change in it: his wife, it appears, is not a clever dairy-woman, like yours. Now, the plan I'm thinking of is to effect a little exchange. If you were to have the Hollow Pastures, you might increase your dairy, which must be so profitable under your wife's management; and I shall request you, Mrs. Poyser, to supply my house with milk, cream, and butter at the market prices. On the other hand, Poyser, you might let Thurle have the Lower and Upper Ridges, which really, with our wet seasons, would be a good riddance for you. There is much less risk in dairy land than corn land."

Mr. Poyser was leaning forward, with his elbows on his knees, his head on one side, and his mouth screwed up—apparently absorbed in making the tips of his fingers meet

so as to represent with perfect accuracy the ribs of a ship. He was much too acute a man not to see through the whole business, and to foresee perfectly what would be his wife's view of the subject; but he disliked giving unpleasant answers: unless it was on a point of farming practice, he would rather give up than quarrel, any day; and, after all, it mattered more to his wife than to him. So, after a few minutes' silence, he looked up at her and said mildly, "What dost say?"

Mrs. Poyser had had her eyes fixed on her husband with cold severity during his silence, but now she turned away her head with a toss, looked icily at the opposite roof of the cow-shed, and spearing her knitting together with a loose pin, held it firmly between her clasped hands.

"Say? Why, I say you may do as you like about giving up any o' your corn land afore your lease is up, which it won't be for a year come next Michaelmas, but I'll not consent to take more dairy work into my hands, either for love or money; and there's nayther love nor money here, as I can see, on'y other folks's love o' theirselves, and the money as is to go into other folks's pockets. I know there's them as is born t'own the land, and them as is born to sweat on't"—here Mrs. Poyser paused to gasp a little—"and I know it's christened folks's duty to submit to their betters as fur as flesh and blood 'ull bear it; but I'll not make a martyr o' myself, and wear myself to skin and bone, and worret myself as if I was a churn wi' butter a-coming in't, for no landlord in England, not if he was King George himself."

"No, no, my dear Mrs. Poyser, certainly not," said the Squire, still confident in his own powers of persuasion, "you must not overwork yourself; but don't you think your work will be rather lessened than increased this way? There is so much milk required at the Abbey, that you will have little

increase of cheese and butter making from the addition to your dairy; and I believe selling the milk is the most profitable way of disposing of dairy produce, is it not?"

"Ay, that's true," said Mr. Poyser, unable to repress an opinion on a question of farming profits, and forgetting that it was not in this case a purely abstract question.

"I daresay," said Mrs. Poyser bitterly, turning her head half-way towards her husband, and looking at the vacant arm-chair—"I daresay it's true for men as sit i' th' chimney corner and make believe as everything's cut wi' ins and outs to fit int' everything else: if you could make a pudding wi' thinking o' the batter, it 'ud be easy getting dinner. How do I know whether the milk will be wanted constant? What's to make me sure that the house won't be put o' board wages afore we're many months older, and then I may have to lie awake o' nights wi' twenty gallons o' milk on my mind—and Dingall 'ull take no more butter, let alone paying for it; and we must fat pigs till we're obliged to beg the butcher on our knees to buy 'em, and lose half of 'em wi' the measles. And there's the fetching and carrying, as 'ud be welly half a day's work for a man an' hoss—*that's* to be took out o' the profits, I reckon? But there's folks 'ud hold a sieve under the pump and expect to carry away the water."

"That difficulty—about the fetching and carrying—you will not have, Mrs. Poyser," said the Squire, who thought that this entrance into particulars indicated a distinct inclination to compromise on Mrs. Poyser's part—"Bethell will do that regularly with the cart and pony."

"Oh, sir, begging your pardon, I've never been used t' having gentlefolks's servants coming about my back places, a-making love to both the gells at once, and keeping 'em with their hands on their hips listening to all manner o' gossip when they should be down on their knees a-scouring.

If we're to go to ruin, it shanna be wi' having our back kitchen turned into a public."

"Well, Poyser," said the Squire, shifting his tactics, and looking as if he thought Mrs. Poyser had suddenly withdrawn from the proceedings and left the room, "you can turn the Hollows into feeding-land. I can easily make another arrangement about supplying my house. And I shall not forget your readiness to accommodate your landlord as well as a neighbour. I know you will be glad to have your lease renewed for three years when the present one expires; otherwise, I daresay Thurle, who is a man of some capital, would be glad to take both the farms, as they could be worked so well together. But I don't want to part with an old tenant like you."

To be thrust out of the discussion in this way would have been enough to complete Mrs. Poyser's exasperation, even without the final threat. Her husband, really alarmed at the possibility of their leaving the old place where he had been bred and born—for he believed the old Squire had small spite enough for anything—was beginning a mild remonstrance explanatory of the inconvenience he should find in having to buy and sell more stock, with—

"Well, sir, I think as it's rather hard . . ." when Mrs. Poyser burst in with the desperate determination to have her say out this once, though it were to rain notices to quit, and the only shelter were the workhouse.

"Then, sir, if I may speak—as, for all I'm a woman, and there's folks as thinks a woman's fool enough to stan' by an' look on while the men sign her soul away, I've a right to speak, for I make one quarter o' the rent, and save another quarter—I say, if Mr. Thurle's so ready to take farms under you, it's a pity but what he should take this, and see if he likes to live in a house wi' all the plagues o' Egypt in't—wi'

the cellar full o' water, and frogs and toads hoppin' up the steps by dozens—and the floors rotten, and the rats and mice gnawing every bit o' cheese, and runnin' over our heads as we lie i' bed till we expect 'em to eat us up alive—as it's a mercy they hanna eat the children long ago. I should like to see if there's another tenant besides Poyser as 'ud put up wi' never having a bit o' repairs done till a place tumbles down—and not then, on'y wi' begging and praying, and having to pay half—and being strung up wi' the rent as it's much if he gets enough out o' the land to pay, for all he's put his own money into the ground beforehand. See if you'll get a stranger to lead such a life here as that: a maggot must be born i' the rotten cheese to like it, I reckon. You may run away from my words, sir," continued Mrs. Poyser, following the old Squire beyond the door—for after the first moments of stunned surprise he had got up, and waving his hand towards her with a smile, had walked out towards his pony. But it was impossible for him to get away immediately, for John was walking the pony up and down the yard, and was some distance from the causeway when his master beckoned.

"You may run away from my words, sir, and you may go spinnin' underhand ways o' doing us a mischief, for you've got Old Harry to your friend, though nobody else is, but I tell you for once as we're not dumb creatures to be abused and made money on by them as ha' got the lash i' their hands, for want o' knowing how to undo the tackle. And if I'm the only one as speaks my mind, there's plenty o' the same way o' thinking i' this parish and the next to't, for your name's no better than a brimstone match i' everybody's nose—if it isna two-three old folks as you think o' saving your soul by giving 'em a bit o' flannel and a drop o' porridge. An' you may be right i' thinking it'll take but little

to save your soul, for it'll be the smallest savin' y' iver made, wi' all your scrapin'."

There are occasions on which two servant-girls and a waggoner may be a formidable audience, and as the Squire rode away on his black pony, even the gift of short-sightedness did not prevent him from being aware that Molly and Nancy and Tim were grinning not far from him. Perhaps he suspected that sour old John was grinning behind him—which was also the fact. Meanwhile the bulldog, the black-and-tan terrier, Alick's sheep-dog, and the gander hissing at a safe distance from the pony's heels, carried out the idea of Mrs. Poyser's solo in an impressive quartett.

Mrs. Poyser, however, had no sooner seen the pony move off than she turned round, gave the two hilarious damsels a look which drove them into the back kitchen, and, unspearing her knitting, began to knit again with her usual rapidity, as she re-entered the house.

"Thee'st done it now," said Mr. Poyser, a little alarmed and uneasy, but not without some triumphant amusement at his wife's outbreak.

"Yes, I know I've done it," said Mrs. Poyser; "but I've had my say out, and I shall be th' easier for't all my life. There's no pleasure i' living, if you're to be corked up for ever, and only dribble your mind out by the sly, like a leaky barrel. I shan't repent saying what I think, if I live to be as old as th' old Squire; and there's little likelihoods—for it seems as if them as aren't wanted here are th' only folks as aren't wanted i' th' other world."

"But thee wutna like moving from th' old place this Michaelmas twelvemonth," said Mr. Poyser, "and going into a strange parish, where thee know'st nobody. It'll be hard upon us both, and upo' father too."

"Eh, it's no use worreting; there's plenty o' things may

happen between this and Michaelmas twelvemonth. The Captain may be master afore then, for what we know," said Mrs. Poyser, inclined to take an unusually hopeful view of an embarrassment which had been brought about by her own merit, and not by other people's fault.

"I'm none for worreting," said Mr. Poyser, rising from his three-cornered chair, and walking slowly towards the door; "but I should be loath to leave the old place, and the parish where I was bred and born, and father afore me. We should leave our roots behind us, I doubt, and niver thrive again."

GEORGE ELIOT: *Adam Bede*

A Clergyman's Home

. . . As Mr. Barton hangs up his hat in the passage, you see that a narrow face of no particular complexion—even the small-pox that has attacked it seems to have been of a mongrel, indefinite kind—with features of no particular shape, and an eye of no particular expression is surmounted by a slope of baldness gently rising from brow to crown. You judge him, rightly, to be about forty. The house is quiet, for it is half past ten, and the children have long been gone to bed. He opens the sitting-room door, but instead of seeing his wife, as he expected, stitching with the nimblest of fingers by the light of one candle, he finds her dispensing with the light of a candle altogether. She is softly pacing up and down by the red firelight, holding in her arms little Walter, the year-old baby, who looks over her shoulder with large wide-open eyes, while the patient mother pats his back with her soft hand, and glances with a sigh at the

heap of large and small stockings lying unmended on the table.

She was a lovely woman, Mrs. Amos Barton; a large, fair, gentle Madonna, with thick, close chestnut curls beside her well-rounded cheeks, and with large, tender, short-sighted eyes. The flowing lines of her tall figure made the limpest dress look graceful, and her old frayed black silk seemed to repose on her bust and limbs with a placid elegance and sense of distinction . . . the caps she wore would have been pronounced, when off her head, utterly heavy and hideous, for in those days even fashionable caps were large and floppy; but surmounting her long arched neck, and mingling their borders of cheap lace and ribbon with her chestnut curls, they seemed miracles of successful millinery. Among strangers she was shy and tremulous as a girl of fifteen; she blushed crimson if any one appealed to her opinion; yet that tall, graceful, substantial presence was so imposing in its mildness, that men spoke to her with an agreeable sensation of timidity. . . . Amos Barton was an affectionate husband, and, in his way, valued his wife as his best treasure.

But now he shut the door behind him, and said, "Well, Milly!"

"Well, dear!" was the corresponding greeting, made eloquent by a smile.

"So that young rascal won't go to sleep! Can't you give him to Nanny?"

"Why, Nanny has been busy ironing this evening; but I think I'll take him to her now." And Mrs. Barton glided towards the kitchen, while her husband ran upstairs to put on his maize-coloured dressing-gown, in which costume he was quietly filling his long pipe when his wife returned to the sitting-room. Maize is a colour that decidedly did *not*

suit his complexion, and it is one that soon soils; why, then, did Mr. Barton select it for domestic wear? Perhaps because he had a knack of hitting on the wrong thing in garb as well as in grammar.

Mrs. Barton now lighted her candle and seated herself before her heap of stockings. She had something disagreeable to tell her husband, but she would not enter on it at once. . . .

"Did the Farquhars say anything about the singing last Sunday?"

"Yes; Farquhar said he thought it was time there was some improvement in the choir. But he was rather scandalised at my setting the tune of 'Lydia.' He says he's always hearing it when he passes the Independent meeting." Here Mr. Barton laughed—he had a way of laughing at criticism that other people thought damaging—and thereby showed the remainder of a set of teeth which, like the remnants of the Old Guard, were few in number, and very much the worse for wear. . . .

"And, dear, Woods the butcher called, to say he must have some money next week. He has a payment to make up."

This announcement made Mr. Barton thoughtful. He puffed more rapidly and looked at the fire.

"I think I must ask Hackitt to lend me twenty pounds, for it is nearly two months till Lady-day, and we can't give Woods our last shilling. . . ."

"I wish we could do without borrowing money, and yet I don't see how we can. Poor Fred must have some new shoes; I couldn't let him go to Mrs. Bond's yesterday because his toes were peeping out, dear child! and I can't let him walk anywhere except in the garden. He must have a pair before Sunday. Really, boots and shoes are the greatest trouble of my life. Everything else one can turn and turn

about, and make old look like new; but there's no coaxing boots and shoes to look better than they are."

Mrs. Barton was playfully undervaluing her skill in metamorphosing boots and shoes. She had at that moment on her feet a pair of slippers which had long ago lived through the prunella phase of their existence, and were now running a respectable career as black silk slippers, having been neatly covered with that material by Mrs. Barton's own neat fingers. . . . She was even trying to persuade her husband to leave off tight pantaloons, because if he would wear the ordinary gun-cases, she knew she could make them so well that no one would suspect the sex of the tailor.

But by this time Mr. Barton has finished his pipe, the candle begins to burn low, and Mrs. Barton goes to see if Nanny has succeeded in lulling Walter to sleep; Nanny is that moment putting him in the little cot by his mother's bed-side; the head, with its thin wavelets of brown hair, indents the little pillow; and a tiny, waxen dimpled fist hides the rosy lips, for baby is given to the infant peccadillo of thumb-sucking.

So Nanny could now join in the short evening prayer, and all could go to bed.

Mrs. Barton carried upstairs the remainder of her heap of stockings, and laid them on a table close to her bed-side, where also she placed a warm shawl, removing her candle, before she put it out to a tin socket fixed at the head of her bed. Her body was very weary, but her heart was not heavy, in spite of Mr. Woods the butcher, and the transitory nature of shoe-leather; for her heart so overflowed with love, she felt sure she was near a fountain of love that would care for husband and babes better than she could foresee; so she was soon asleep. But about half-past five o'clock in the morning, if there were any angels watching round her bed—and angels

might be glad of such an office—they saw Mrs. Barton rise up quietly careful not to disturb the sleeping Amos, who was snoring the snore of the just, light her candle, prop herself upright with the pillows, throw the warm shawl round her shoulders, and renew her attack on the heap of undarned stockings. She darned away until she heard Nanny stirring, and then drowsiness came with the dawn; the candle was put out, and she sank into a doze. But at nine o'clock she was at the breakfast-table, busy cutting bread-and-butter for five hungry mouths, while Nanny, baby on one arm, in rosy cheeks, fat neck, and night-gown, brought in a jug of hot milk-and-water. Nearest her mother sits the nine-year-old Patty, the eldest child, whose sweet fair face is already rather grave sometimes, and who always wants to run upstairs to save mamma's legs, which get so tired of an evening. Then there are four other blond heads—two boys and two girls, gradually decreasing in size down to Chubby, who is making a round O of her mouth to receive a bit of papa's "baton." Papa's attention was divided between petting Chubby, rebuking the noisy Fred, which he did with a somewhat excessive sharpness, and eating his own breakfast. He had not yet looked at mamma, and did not know that her cheek was paler than usual. But Patty whispered, "Mamma, have you the headache?"

GEORGE ELIOT: "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," from *Scenes of Clerical Life*

Brother and Sister

"MAGGIE," said Tom confidentially, taking her into a corner, as soon as his mother was gone out to examine his box, and

the warm parlour had taken off the chill he had felt from the long drive, "you don't know what I've got in *my* pockets," nodding his head up and down as a means of rousing her sense of mystery.

"No," said Maggie. "How stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls (marbles) or cobnuts?" Maggie's heart sank a little, because Tom always said it was "no good" playing with *her* at those games—she played so badly.

"Marls! no; I've swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!" He drew something half out of his right-hand pocket.

"What is it?" said Maggie, in a whisper. "I can see nothing but a bit of yellow."

"Why, it's . . . a . . . new . . . guess, Maggie!"

"Oh, I can't guess, Tom," said Maggie impatiently.

"Don't be a spitfire, else I won't tell you," said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket, and looking determined.

"No, Tom," said Maggie imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in one pocket. "I'm not cross, Tom; it was only because I couldn't bear guessing. Please be good to me."

Tom's arm slowly relaxed, and he said, "Well, then, it's a new fish-line—two new uns—one for you, Maggie, all to yourself. I wouldn't go halves in the toffee and gingerbread on purpose to save the money; and Gibson and Spouncer fought with me because I wouldn't. And here's hooks; see here! . . . I say, won't we go and fish to-morrow down by Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie, and put the worms on, and everything—won't it be fun?"

Maggie's answer was to throw her arms round Tom's neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without

speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying, after a pause,—

“Wasn’t I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know, I needn’t have bought it, if I hadn’t liked.”

“Yes, very, very good. . . . I do love you, Tom.”

Tom had put the line back in his pocket, and was looking at the hooks, one by one, before he spoke again.

“And the fellows fought me, because I wouldn’t give in about the toffee.”

“Oh dear! I wish they wouldn’t fight at your school, Tom. Didn’t it hurt you?”

“Hurt me? no,” said Tom, putting up the hooks again, taking out a large pocket-knife, and slowly opening the largest blade, which he looked at meditatively, as he rubbed his finger along it. Then he added—

“I gave Spouncer a black eye, I know—that’s what he got by wanting to leather *me*; I wasn’t going to go halves because anybody leathered me.”

“Oh, how brave you are, Tom! I think you’re like Samson. If there came a lion roaring at me, I think you’d fight him—wouldn’t you, Tom?”

“How can a lion come roaring at you, you silly thing? There’s no lions, only in the shows.”

“No; but if we were in the lion countries—I mean in Africa, where it’s very hot—the lions eat people there. I can show it you in the book where I read it.”

“Well, I should get a gun and shoot him.”

“But if you hadn’t got a gun—we might have gone out, you know, not thinking—just as we go fishing; and then a great lion might run towards us roaring, and we couldn’t get away from him. What should you do, Tom?”

Tom paused, and at last turned away contemptuously,

saying, "But the lion isn't coming. What's the use of talking?"

"But I like to fancy how it would be," said Maggie, following him. "Just think what you would do, Tom."

"Oh, don't bother, Maggie! you're such a silly—I shall go and see my rabbits."

Maggie's heart began to flutter with fear.

She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in trembling silence as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger; for Maggie dreaded Tom's anger of all things—it was quite a different anger from her own.

"Tom," she said timidly, when they were out of doors, "how much money did you give for your rabbits?"

"Two half-crowns and a sixpence," said Tom promptly.

"I think I've got a great deal more than that in my steel purse upstairs. I'll ask mother to give it you."

"What for?" said Tom. "I don't want your money, you silly thing. I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl."

"Well, but Tom—if mother would let me give you the two half-crowns and a sixpence out of my purse to put into your pocket and spend, you know; and buy some more rabbits with it?"

"More rabbits? I don't want any more."

"Oh, but, Tom, they're all dead."

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round towards Maggie. "You forgot to feed 'em, then, and Harry forgot?" he said, his colour heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. "I'll pitch into Harry—I'll have him turned away. And I don't love you, Maggie. You shan't go fishing

with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day." He walked on again.

"Yes, but I forgot—and I couldn't help it, indeed, Tom. I'm so very sorry," said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

"You're a naughty girl," said Tom severely, "And I'm sorry I bought you the fish-line. I don't love you."

"Oh, Tom, it's very cruel," sobbed Maggie. "I'd forgive you, if *you* forgot anything—I wouldn't mind what you did—I'd forgive you and love you."

"Yes, you're a silly—but I never *do* forget things—I don't."

"Oh, please forgive me, Tom; my heart will break," said Maggie, shaking with sobs, clinging to Tom's arm, and laying her wet cheek on his shoulder.

Tom shook her off, and stopped again, saying in a peremptory tone, "Now, Maggie, you just listen. Aren't I a good brother to you?"

"Ye-ye-es," sobbed Maggie, her chin rising and falling convulsedly.

"Didn't I think about your fish-line all this quarter, and mean to buy it, and saved my money o' purpose, and wouldn't go halves in the toffee, and Spouncer fought me because I wouldn't?"

"Ye-ye-es . . . and I . . . lo-lo-love you so, Tom."

"But you're a naughty girl. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge box, and the holidays before that you let the boat drag my fish-line down when I'd set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite all for nothing."

"But I didn't mean," said Maggie; "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could," said Tom, "if you'd minded what you were doing. And you're a naughty girl, and you shan't go fishing with me to-morrow."

With this terrible conclusion, Tom ran away from Maggie

towards the mill, meaning to greet Luke there, and complain to him of Harry.

Maggie stood motionless, except for her sobs, for a minute or two; then she turned round and ran into the house, and up to her attic, where she sat on the floor, and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery. Tom was come home, and she had thought how happy she should be—and now he was cruel to her. What use was anything, if Tom didn't love her? Oh, he was very cruel! Hadn't she wanted to give him the money, and said how very sorry she was? She knew she was naughty to her mother, but she had never been naughty to Tom—had never *meant* to be naughty to him. . . .

Maggie soon thought she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea-time, and they were all having their tea, and not thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself—hide herself behind the tub, and stay there all night; and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart, as she crept behind the tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now—would he forgive her?—perhaps her father would be there, and he would take her part. But, then, she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; but then the need of being loved, the strongest need in poor Maggie's nature, began to wrestle with her pride, and soon threw it. She crept from behind her tub into the twilight of the long attic, but just then she heard a quick footstep on the stairs.

Tom had been too much interested in his talk with Luke,

in going the round of the premises, walking in and out where he pleased, and whittling sticks without any particular reason, except that he *didn't* whittle sticks at school, to think of Maggie and the effect his anger had produced on her. He meant to punish her, and that business having been performed, he occupied himself with other matters, like a practical person. But when he had been called into tea, his father said, "Why, where's the little wench?" and Mrs. Tulliver almost at the same minute said, "Where's your little sister?"—both of them having supposed that Maggie and Tom had been together all the afternoon.

"I don't know," said Tom. He didn't want to "tell" of Maggie, though he was angry with her; for Tom Tulliver was a lad of honour.

"What! hasn't she been playing with you all this while?" said the father. "She'd been thinking o' nothing but your coming home."

"I haven't seen her this two hours," says Tom, commencing on the plum-cake.

"Goodness heart! she's got drowned!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver, rising from her seat and running to the window. "How could you let her do so?" she added, as became a fearful woman, accusing she didn't know whom of she didn't know what.

"Nay, nay, she's none drowned!" said Mr. Tulliver. "You've been naughty to her, I doubt, Tom?"

"I'm sure I haven't, father," said Tom indignantly. "I think she's in the house."

"Perhaps up in that attic," said Mrs. Tulliver, "a-singing and talking to herself, and forgetting all about meal-times."

"You go and fetch her down, Tom," said Mr. Tulliver, rather sharply, his perspicacity or his fatherly fondness for Maggie making him suspect that the lad had been hard upon

"the little 'un," else she would never have left his side. "And be good to her, do you hear? Else I'll let you know better."

Tom never disobeyed his father, for Mr. Tulliver was a peremptory man, and, as he said, would never let anybody get hold of his whip-hand; but he went out rather sullenly, carrying his piece of plum-cake, and not intending to re-prieve Maggie's punishment, which was no more than she deserved. Tom was only thirteen, and had no decided views on grammar and arithmetic, regarding them for the most part as open questions, but he was particularly clear and positive on one point—namely that he would punish everybody who deserved it: why, he wouldn't have minded being punished himself, if he deserved it; but, then, he never *did* deserve it.

It was Tom's step, then, that Maggie heard on the stairs, when her need of love had triumphed over her pride, and she was going down with her swollen eyes and dishevelled hair to beg for pity. At least her father would stroke her head and say, "Never mind, my wench. . . ."

But she knew Tom's step, and her heart began to beat violently with the shock of hope. He only stood still at the top of the stairs and said, "Maggie, you're to come down." But she rushed to him and clung round his neck, sobbing, "Oh, Tom, please forgive me—I can't bear it—I will always be good—always remember things—do love me—please, dear Tom! . . ."

Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his, and kiss his ear in a random, sobbing way; and there were tender fibres in the lad that had been used to answer to Maggie's fondling; so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she deserved: he actually began to kiss her in return, and say—

"Don't cry, then, Magsie—here, eat a bit o' cake."

Maggie's sobs began to subside, and she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; and then Tom bit a piece, just for company, and they ate together and rubbed each other's cheeks and brows and noses together, while they ate, with a humiliating resemblance to two friendly ponies.

"Come along, Magsie, and have tea," said Tom at last, when there was no more cake except what was downstairs.

GEORGE ELIOT: *The Mill on the Floss*

Dressing for Tea

THREE of the ladies quickly retired, but the Miss Gunns were quite content that Mrs. Osgood's inclination to remain with her niece gave them also a reason for staying to see the rustic beauty's toilette. And it was really a pleasure—from the first opening of the bandbox, where everything smelt of lavender and rose-leaves, to the clasping of the small coral necklace that fitted closely round her little white neck. Everything belonging to Miss Nancy was of delicate purity and nattiness: not a crease was where it had no business to be, not a bit of her linen professed whiteness without fulfilling its profession; the very pins on her pincushion were stuck in after a pattern from which she was careful to allow no aberration; and as for her own person, it gave the same idea of perfect unvarying neatness as the body of a little bird. It is true that her light-brown hair was cropped behind like a boy's, and was dressed in front in a number of flat rings, that lay quite away from her face; but there was no sort of coiffure that could make Miss Nancy's cheek and neck look otherwise than pretty; and when at last she stood complete in her silvery

twilled silk, her lace tucker, her coral necklace, and coral ear-drops, the Miss Gunns could find nothing to criticise except her hands, which bore the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work. But Miss Nancy was not ashamed of that, for even while she was dressing she narrated to her aunt how she and Priscilla had packed their boxes yesterday, because this morning was baking morning, and since they were leaving home, it was desirable to make a good supply of meat pies for the kitchen; and as she concluded this judicious remark, she turned to the Miss Gunns that she might not commit the rudeness of not including them in the conversation. The Miss Gunns smiled stiffly, and thought what a pity it was that these rich country people, who could afford to buy such good clothes (really Miss Nancy's lace and silk were very costly), should be brought up in utter ignorance and vulgarity. She actually said "mate" for "meat," "appen" for "perhaps," and "oss" for horse, which, to young ladies living in good Lytherly society, who habitually said 'orse, even in domestic privacy, and only said "appen" on the right occasions, was necessarily shocking. Miss Nancy, indeed, had never been to any school higher than Dame Tedman's: her acquaintance with profane literature hardly went beyond the rhymes she had worked in her large sampler under the lamb and the shepherdess; and in order to balance an account, she was obliged to effect her subtraction by removing visible metallic shillings and sixpences from a visible metallic total. There is hardly a servant-maid in these days who is not better informed than Miss Nancy; yet she had the essential attributes of a lady—high veracity, delicate honour in her dealings, deference to others, and refined personal habits. . . .

The anxiety about sister Priscilla, which had grown rather active by the time the coral necklace was clasped, was happily

ended by the entrance of that cheerful-looking lady herself, with a face made blowsy by cold and damp. After the first questions and greetings, she turned to Nancy, and surveyed her from head to foot—then wheeled her round to ascertain that the back view was equally faultless.

“What do you think o’ *these* gowns, aunt Osgood?” said Priscilla, while Nancy helped her to unrobe.

“Very handsome indeed, niece,” said Mrs. Osgood, with a slight increase of formality. She always thought niece Priscilla too rough.

“I’m obliged to have the same as Nancy, you know, for all I’m five years older and it makes me look yallow; for she never *will* have anything without I have mine just like it, because she wants us to look like sisters. And I tell her folks ’ull think it’s my weakness makes me fancy as I shall look pretty in what she looks pretty in. For I *am* ugly—there’s no denying that: I feature my father’s family. But law! I don’t mind, do you?” Priscilla here turned to the Miss Gunns, rattling on in too much preoccupation with the delight of talking, to notice that her candour was not appreciated. “The pretty ’uns do for fly-catchers—they keep the men off us. I’ve no opinion of the men, Miss Gunn—I don’t know what you have. . . . As I say, Mr. Have-your-own-way is the best husband, and the only one I’d ever promise to obey. . . .”

The delicate process of getting her narrow gown over her head without injury to her smooth curls, obliged Miss Priscilla to pause in this rapid survey of life, and Mrs. Osgood seized the opportunity of rising and saying—

“Well, niece, you’ll follow us. The Miss Gunns will like to go down.”

“Sister,” said Miss Nancy, when they were alone, “you’ve offended the Miss Gunns, I’m sure.”

"What have I done, child?" said Priscilla, in some alarm.

"Why, you asked them if they minded about being ugly—you're so very blunt."

"Law, did I? Well, it popped out: it's a mercy I said no more, for I'm a bad 'un to live with folks when they don't like the truth. But as for being ugly, look at me, child, in this silver-coloured silk. . . . I look as yallow as a daffadil. Anybody 'ud say you wanted to make a mawkin of me."

"No, Priscy, don't say so. I begged and prayed of you not to let us hawe this silk if you'd like another better. . . ."

"Nonsense, child, you know you'd set your heart on this; and reason good, for you're the colour o' cream. It 'ud be fine doings for you to dress yourself to suit *my* skin. But you do as you like with me—you always did, from when you first began to walk. If you wanted to go the field's length, the field's length you'd go; and there was no whipping you, for you looked as prim and innicent as a daisy all the while."

"Priscy," said Nancy, gently, as she fastened a coral necklace, exactly like her own, round Priscilla's neck, which was very far from being like her own, "I'm sure I'm willing to give way as far as is right, but who shouldn't dress alike if it isn't sisters? Would you have us go about looking as if we were no kin to one another? . . . I'd do what was right, if I dressed in a gown dyed with cheese-colouring; and I'd rather you'd choose, and let me wear what pleases you."

"There you go again! You'd come round to the same thing if one talked to you from Saturday night till Saturday morning. It'll be fine fun to see how you'll master your husband and never raise your voice above the singing o' the kettle all the while. I like to see the men mastered!"

"Don't talk so, Priscy," said Nancy, blushing. "You know I don't mean ever to be married."

"O, you never mean a fiddlestick's end!" said Priscilla,

as she arranged her discarded dress and closed her bandbox. "Who shall I have to work for when father's gone, if you are to go and take it in your head to be an old maid. . . . One old maid's enough out o' two sisters; and I shall do credit to a single life, for God A'mighty meant me for it. Come, we can go down now. I'm as ready as a mawkin can be—there's nothing wanting to frighten the crows, now I've got my ear-droppers in. . . ."

Places of honour had been kept for the Miss Lammeters near the head of the principal tea-table in the wainscoted parlour, now looking fresh and pleasant with handsome branches of holly, yew and laurel, from the abundant growths of the old garden; and Nancy felt an inward flutter, that no firmness of purpose could prevent, when she saw Mr. Godfrey Cass advancing to lead her to a seat between himself and Mr. Crackenthorp, while Priscilla was called to the opposite side between her father and the Squire.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

Trials of a Governess

WE were situated nearly two miles from the village church, and, consequently, the family carriage was put in requisition every Sunday morning, and sometimes oftener. Mr. and Mrs. Murray generally thought it sufficient to show themselves at church once in the course of the day; but frequently the children preferred going a second time to wandering about the grounds all the day with nothing to do. If some of my pupils chose to walk and take me with them, it was well for me; for otherwise my position in the carriage was, to be crushed into the corner farthest from the open window, and

with my back to the horse: a position which invariably made me sick; and, if I were not actually obliged to leave the church in the middle of the service, my devotions were disturbed with a feeling of languor and sickness, and the tormenting fear of its becoming worse; and a depressing headache was generally my companion throughout the day, which would otherwise have been one of welcome rest and holy, calm enjoyment.

"It's very odd, Miss Grey, that the carriage should always make you sick: it never makes *me*," remarked Miss Matilda.

"Nor me either," said her sister, "but I daresay it would, if I sat where she does—such a nasty, horrid place, Miss Grey; I wonder how you can bear it!"

"I am obliged to bear it, since no choice is left me," I might have answered; but in tenderness for their feelings I only replied—"Oh! it is but a short way, and if I am not sick in church, I don't mind it."

If I were called upon to give a description of the usual divisions and arrangements of the day, I should find it a very difficult matter. I had all my meals in the schoolroom with my pupils, at such times as suited their fancy: sometimes they would ring for dinner before it was half-cooked; sometimes they would keep it waiting on the table for above an hour, and then be out of humour because the potatoes were cold, and the gravy covered with cakes of solid fat; sometimes they would have tea at four; frequently, they would storm at the servants because it was not in precisely at five; and when these orders were obeyed, by way of encouragement to punctuality, they would keep it on the table till seven or eight.

Their hours of study were managed in much the same way; my judgment or convenience was never once consulted. Sometimes Matilda and John would determine "to

get all the plaguy business over before breakfast," and send the maid to call me up at half-past five, without any scruple or apology; sometimes, I was told to be ready precisely at six, and, having dressed in a hurry, came down to an empty room, and after waiting a long time in suspense, discovered that they had changed their minds, and were still in bed; or perhaps, if it were a fine summer morning, Brown would come to tell me that the young ladies and gentlemen had taken a holiday, and were gone out; and then I was kept waiting for breakfast till I was almost ready to faint: they having fortified themselves with something before they went.

Often they would do their lessons in the open air; which I had nothing to say against: except that I frequently caught cold by sitting on the damp grass, or from exposure to the evening dew, or some insidious draught, which seemed to have no injurious effect on them. It was quite right that they should be hardy; yet, surely, they might have been taught some consideration for others who were less so. But I must not blame them for what was, perhaps, my own fault; for I never made any particular objections to sitting where they pleased; foolishly choosing to risk the consequences, rather than trouble them for my convenience. Their indecorous manner of doing their lessons was quite as remarkable as the caprice displayed in their choice of time and place. While receiving my instructions, or repeating what they had learned, they would lounge upon the sofa, lie on the rug, stretch, yawn, talk to each other, or look out of the window; whereas I could not so much as stir the fire, or pick up the handkerchief I had dropped, without being rebuked for inattention by one of my pupils, or told that "mamma would not like me to be so careless."

The servants, seeing in what little estimation the governess

was held by both parents and children, regulated their behaviour by the same standard. I have frequently stood up for them, at the risk of some injury to myself, against the tyranny and injustice of their young masters and mistresses; and I always endeavoured to give them as little trouble as possible: but they entirely neglected my comfort, despised my requests, and slighted my directions. All servants, I am convinced, would not have done so; but domestics in general, being ignorant and little accustomed to reason and reflection, are too easily corrupted by the carelessness and bad example of those above them; and these, I think, were not of the best order to begin with.

I sometimes felt myself degraded by the life I led, and ashamed of submitting to so many indignities; and sometimes I thought myself a fool for caring so much about them, and feared I must be sadly wanting in Christian humility, or that charity which "suffereth long and is kind, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, endureth all things." But, with time and patience, matters began to be slightly ameliorated: slowly, it is true, and almost imperceptibly; but I got rid of my male pupils (that was no trifling advantage), and the girls, as I intimated before concerning one of them, became a little less insolent, and began to show some symptoms of esteem. "Miss Grey was a queer creature: she never flattered, and did not praise them half enough; but whenever she did speak favourably of them, or anything belonging to them, they could be quite sure her approbation was sincere. She was very obliging, quiet, and peaceable in the main, but there were some things that put her out of temper: they did not much care for that, to be sure, but still it was better to keep her in tune; as when she was in a good humour she would talk to them, and be very agreeable and amusing sometimes, in her way; which was

quite different to mamma's, but still very well for a change. She had her own opinions on every subject, and kept steadily to them—very tiresome opinions they often were; as she was always thinking of what was right and what was wrong, and had a strange reverence for matters connected with religion, and an unaccountable liking for good people."

ANNE BRONTË: *Agnes Grey*

At a Boys' School

THE lower-school boys of the School-house, some fifteen in number, had tea in the lower-fifth school, and were presided over by the old verger or head porter. Each boy had a quarter of a loaf of bread and pat of butter, and as much tea as he pleased, and there was scarcely one who didn't add to this some further luxury, such as baked potatoes, a herring, sprats, or something of the sort; but few, at this period of the half-year, could live up to a pound of Porter's sausages, and East was in great magnificence upon the strength of theirs. He had produced a toasting-fork from his study, and set Tom to toast the sausages, while he mounted guard over their butter and potatoes; "'Cause," as he explained, "you're a new boy, and they'll play you some trick and get our butter, but you can toast just as well as I." So Tom, in the midst of three or four more urchins similarly employed, toasted his face and the sausages at the same time before the huge fire, till the latter cracked; when East from his watch-tower shouted that they were done, and then the feast proceeded, and the festive cups of tea were filled and emptied, and Tom imparted the sausages in small bits to many neighbours, and thought he had never tasted such good potatoes

or seen such jolly boys. They on their parts waived all ceremony, and pegged away at the sausages and potatoes, and remembering Tom's performance in goal, voted East's new crony a brick. After tea, and while the things were being cleared away, they gathered round the fire, and the talk on the match still went on; and those who had them to show, pulled up their trousers and showed the hacks they had received in the good cause.

They were soon, however, all turned out of the school, and East conducted Tom up to his bedroom, that he might get on clean things and wash himself before singing.

"What's singing?" said Tom, taking his head out of his basin, where he had been plunging it in cold water.

"Well, you are jolly green," answered his friend from a neighbouring basin. "Why the last six Saturdays of every half, we sing of course; and this is the first of them. No first lesson to do, you know, and lie in bed to-morrow morning."

"But who sings?"

"Why everybody, of course; you'll see soon enough. We begin directly after supper, and sing till bedtime. It ain't such good fun now tho' as in the summer half, 'cause then we sing in the little fives' court, under the library you know. We take out tables, and the big boys sit round, and drink beer; double allowance on Saturday nights; and we cut about the quadrangle between the songs, and it looks like a lot of robbers in a cave. And the louts come and pound at the great gates, and we pound back again, and shout at them. But this half we only sing in the hall. Come along down to my study."

Their principal employment in the study was to clear out East's table, removing the drawers and ornaments and tablecloth, for he lived in the bottom passage, and his table was in requisition for the singing.

Supper came in due course at seven o'clock, consisting of bread and cheese and beer, which was all saved for the singing; and directly afterwards the fags went to work to prepare the hall. The School-house hall, as has been said, is a great long high room, with two large fires on one side, and two large iron-bound tables, one running down the middle, and the other along the wall opposite the fireplaces. Around the upper fire the fags placed the tables in the form of a horse-shoe, and upon them the jugs with the Saturday night's allowance of beer. Then the big boys began to drop in and take their seats, bringing with them bottled beer and song-books; for although they all knew the songs by heart, it was the thing to have an old manuscript book descended from some departed hero, in which they were all carefully written out.

The sixth-form boys had not yet appeared, so to fill up the gap, an interesting and time-honoured ceremony was gone through. Each new boy was placed on the table in turn, and made to sing a solo, under the penalty of drinking a large mug of salt and water if he resisted or broke down. However, the new boys all sing like nightingales to-night, and the salt water is not in requisition; Tom as his part performing the old west-country song of "the leather Bottèl" with considerable applause. And at the half-hour down come the sixth- and fifth-form boys, and take their places at the tables, which are filled up by the next biggest boys, the rest, for whom there is no room at table, standing round outside.

The glasses and mugs are filled, and then the fagle-man strikes up the old sea song—

"A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
And a wind that follows fast," etc.,

which is the invariable first song in the School-house, and

all the seventy voices join in, not mindful of harmony, but bent on noise, which they attain decidedly,—but the general effect isn't bad. And then follows "The British Grenadiers," "Billy Taylor," "The Siege of Seringapatam," "Three Jolly Postboys," and other vociferous songs in rapid succession, including the "Chesapeake and Shannon," a song lately introduced in honour of old Brooke; and when they come to the words—

"Brave Broke he waved his sword, crying, Now my lads
aboard,
And we'll stop their playing Yankee-doodle-dandy oh!"

you expect the roof to come down. The sixth and fifth know that "brave Broke" of the *Shannon* was no sort of relation to our old Brooke. The fourth form are uncertain in their belief, but for the most part hold that old Brooke *was* a midshipman then, on board his uncle's ship. And the lower school never doubt for a moment that it was our old Brooke who led the boarders, in what capacity they care not a straw. During the pauses the bottled-beer corks fly rapidly, and the talk is fast and merry, and the big boys, at least all of them who have a fellow-feeling for dry throats, hand their mugs over their shoulders to be emptied by the small ones who stand round behind.

THOMAS HUGHES: *Tom Brown's School Days*

A Wedding

AMABEL, of course, went with her parents. Poor child! her tears flowed freely on the way, and Mr. Edmondstone, now that it had really come to the point of parting with his little

Amy, was very much overcome, while his wife, hardly refraining from tears, could only hold her daughter's hand very close.

The regular morning service was a great comfort, by restoring their tranquillity, and by the time it was ended, Amabel's countenance had settled into its own calm expression of trust and serenity. She scarcely even trembled when her father led her forward; her hand did not shake, and her voice, though very low, was firm and audible; while Guy's deep, sweet tones had a sort of thrill and quiver of intense feeling.

No one could help observing that Laura was the most agitated person present; she trembled so much that she was obliged to lean on Charlotte, and her tears gave the infection to the other bridesmaids—all but Mary Ross, who could never cry when other people did, and little Marianne, who did nothing but look and wonder.

Mary was feeling a great deal, both of compassion for the bereaved family and of affectionate admiring joy for the young pair who knelt before the altar. It was a showery day, with gleams of vivid sunshine, and one of these suddenly broke forth, casting a stream of colour from a martyr's figure in the south window, so as to shed a golden glory on the wave of brown hair over Guy's forehead, then passing on and tinting the bride's white veil with a deep glowing shade of crimson and purple.

Either that golden light, or the expression of the face on which it beamed, made Mary think of the lines—

Where is the brow to wear in mortal's sight,
The crown of pure angelic light?

Charles stood with his head leaning against a pillar as if he could not bear to look up; Mr. Edmonstone was restless and

almost sobbing; Mrs. Edmonstone alone collected, though much flushed and somewhat trembling, while the only person apparently free from excitement was the little bride, as there she knelt, her hand clasped in his, her head bent down, her modest, steadfast face looking as if she was only conscious of the vow she exchanged, the blessing she received; and was, as it were, lifted out of herself.

It was over now. The feast, in its fullest sense, was held, and the richest of blessings had been called down on them.

The procession came out of the vestry in full order, and very pretty it was; the bride and bridegroom in the fresh bright graciousness of their extreme youth, and the six bridesmaids following; Laura and Lady Eveleen, two strikingly handsome and elegant girls; Charlotte with the pretty little fair Marianne; Mary Ross, and Grace Harper. The village people who stood round might well say that such a sight as that was worth coming twenty miles to see. . . .

No one would care to hear the details of the breakfast, and the splendours of the cake; how Charlotte recovered her spirits while distributing the favours; and Lady Eveleen set up a flirtation with Markham, and forced him into wearing one, though he protested; how often Charles was obliged to hear it had been a pretty wedding; and how well Lord Kilcoran made his speech proposing the health of Sir Guy and Lady Morville.

C. M. YONGE: *The Heir of Redclyffe*

The Doctor's Discovery

IN December 1802 she was born—our Muriel. And on February 9th—alas! I have need to remember the date!—she

formally received her name. We all dined at John's house—Dr. and Mrs. Jessop, my father and I.

It was the first time my father had taken a meal under any roof but his own for twenty years. We had not expected him, since, when asked and entreated, he only shook his head; but just when we were all sitting down to the table, Ursula at the foot, her cheeks flushed, and her lips dimpling with a housewifely delight that everything was so nice and neat, she startled us by a little cry of pleasure. And there, in the doorway, stood my father!

His broad figure, but slightly bent even now, his smooth-shaven face, withered, but of a pale brown still, with the hard lines softening down, and the keen eyes kinder than they used to be; dressed carefully in his First-day clothes, the stainless white kerchief supporting his large chin, his Quaker's hat in one hand, his stick in the other, looking in at us, a half-amused twitch mingling with the gravity of his mouth—thus he stood—thus I see thee, O my dear old father!

The young couple seemed as if they could never welcome him enough. He only said, "I thank thee, John," "I thank thee, Ursula"; and took his place beside the latter, giving no reason why he had changed his mind and come. Simple as the dinner was—simple as befitted those who, their guests knew, could not honestly afford luxuries; though there were no ornaments, save the centre nosegay of laurustinus and white Christmas roses—I do not think King George himself ever sat down to a nobler feast.

Afterwards we drew merrily round the fire, or watched outside the window the thickly falling snow.

"It has not snowed these two months," said John—"Never since the day our little girl was born."

And at this moment, as if she heard herself mentioned,

and was indignant at our having forgotten her so long, the little maid set up a cry—that unmistakeable child's cry, which seems to change the whole atmosphere of a household.

My father gave a start—he had never seen or expressed a wish to see John's daughter. We knew he did not like babies. Again the little helpless wail; Ursula rose and stole away—Abel Fletcher looked after her with a curious expression, then began to say something about going back to the tanyard. . . . And then Mrs. Halifax entered holding in her arms her little winter flower, her baby daughter. . . .

"She might well come in a snow-storm," said Mrs. Jessop, taking the child. "She is just like snow, so soft and white."

"And as soundless—she hardly ever cries. She just lies in this way half the day over, quietly cooing, with her eyes shut. There, she has caught your dress fast. Now, was there ever a two-months-old baby so quick at noticing things? and she does it all with her fingers—she touches everything;—ah! take care, doctor," the mother added reproachfully, at a loud slam of the door, which made the baby tremble all over. . . .

"She must have astonishingly quick hearing," said the doctor, slightly annoyed. Ursula wisely began to talk of something else—showed Muriel's eyelashes, very long for such a baby—and descanted on the colour of her eyes, that fruitful and never-ending theme of mothers and friends.

"I think they are like her father's; yes, certainly like her father's. But we have not many opportunities of judging, for she is such a lazy young damsel, she hardly ever opens them—we should often fancy her asleep, but for that little soft coo; and then she will wake all of a sudden. There now! do you see her? Come to the window, my beauty! And show Dr. Jessop your bonny brown eyes."

They were bonny eyes! lovely in shape and colour, delicately fringed; but there was something strange in their expression—or rather, in their want of it. Many babies have a round, vacant stare—but this was no stare, only a wide, full look—a look of quiet blankness—an *unseeing* look.

It caught Dr. Jessop's notice. I saw his air of vexed dignity change into a certain anxiety.

"Well, whose are they like—her father's or mine? His, I hope—it will be the better for her beauty. Nay, we'll excuse all compliments."

"I—I can't exactly tell. I could judge better by candle-light."

"We'll have candles."

"No—no! Had we not better put it off altogether till another day?—I'll call in to-morrow and look at her eyes."

His manner was hesitating and troubled. John noticed it.

"Love, give her to me. Go and get us lights, will you?"

When she was gone, John took his baby to the window, gazed long and intently into her little face, then at Dr. Jessop. "Do you think—no—it's not possible—that there can be anything the matter with the child's eyes?"

Ursula, coming in, heard the last words.

"What was that you said about baby's eyes?"

No one answered her. All were gathered in a group at the window, the child being held on her father's lap, while Dr. Jessop was trying to open the small, white lids, kept so constantly closed. At last the baby uttered a little cry of pain—the mother darted forward, and clasped it almost savagely to her breast.

"I will not have my baby hurt! There is nothing wrong with her sweet eyes. Go away; you shall not touch her, John."

“Love!”

She melted at that low, fond word; leaning against his shoulder—trying to control her tears.

“Only once again, my darling. It is best. Then we shall be quite satisfied. Phineas, give me the candle.”

. . . Ursula resisted no more, but let him take Muriel—little, unconscious, cooing dove! Lulled by her father’s voice she once more opened her eyes wide. Dr. Jessop passed the candle before them many times, once so close that it almost touched her face; but the full, quiet eyes, never blenched nor closed. He set the light down.

“Doctor!” whispered the father, in a wild appeal against—ay, it was against certainty. He snatched the candle, and tried the experiment himself.

“She does not see at all. Can she be blind?”

“Born blind. . . .”

“Blind!” The word was uttered softly, hardly above a breath, yet the mother heard it. She pushed everyone aside, and took the child herself. Herself, with a desperate incredulity, she looked into those eyes which never could look back either her agony or her love. Poor mother!

“John! John! oh, John!”—the name rising into a cry, as if he could surely help her. He came and took her in his arms—took both, wife and babe. She laid her head on his shoulder in bitter weeping. “Oh, John! it is so hard. Our pretty one—our own little child! . . .”

Some one came behind her, and placed her in the arm-chair gently. It was my father. He sat down by her, taking her hand.

“Grieve not, Ursula. I had a little brother who was blind. He was the happiest creature I ever knew.”

My father sighed. We all marvelled to see the wonderful softness, even tenderness, which had come into him.

"Give me thy child for a minute." Ursula laid it across his knees; he put his hand solemnly on the baby breast. "God bless this little one! Ay, and she shall be blessed."

These words, spoken with as full assurance as the prophetic benediction of the departing patriarchs of old, struck us all. We looked at little Muriel as if a blessing were already upon her; as if the mysterious touch which had sealed up her eyes for ever had left on her a sanctity like as of one who has been touched by the finger of God.

MRS. CRAIK: *John Halifax, Gentleman*

Wine

SIR WILLOUGHBY advanced, appearing in a cordial mood.

"I need not ask you whether you are better," he said to Clara, sparkled to Laetitia, and raised a key to the level of Dr. Middleton's breast, remarking, "I am going down to my inner cellar."

"An inner cellar!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Sacred from the butler. It is interdicted to Stoneman. Shall I offer myself as guide to you? My cellars are worth a visit."

"Cellars are not catacombs. They are, if rightly constructed, rightly considered, cloisters, where the bottle meditates on joys to bestow, not on dust misused! Have you anything great?"

"A wine aged ninety."

"Is it associated with your pedigree, that you pronounce the age with such assurance?"

"My grandfather inherited it."

"Your grandfather, Sir Willoughby, had meritorious offspring, not to speak of his generous progenitors. What would

have happened had it fallen into the female line! I shall be glad to accompany you. Port? Hermitage?"

"Port."

"Ah! We are in England!"

"There will just be time," said Sir Willoughby, inducing Dr. Middleton to step out.

A chirrup was in the Rev. Doctor's tone: "Hocks, too, have compassed age. I have tasted senior Hocks. Their flavours are as a brook of many voices; they have depth also. Senatorial Port! we say. We cannot say that of any other wine. Port is deep-sea deep. It is in its flavour deep; mark the difference. It is like a classic tragedy, organic in conception. . . . Port is our noblest legacy! Observe, I do not compare the wines; I distinguish the qualities. Let them live together for our enrichment; they are not rivals like the Idaen three. . . . I cherish the fancy that Port speaks the sentences of wisdom, Burgundy sings the inspired Ode. Or put it, that Port is the Homeric hexameter, Burgundy the Pin-daric dithyramb. What do you say?"

"The comparison is excellent, sir. . . ."

Sir Willoughby was patient. He was about as accordantly coupled with Dr. Middleton in discourse as a drum duetting with a bass viol; and when he struck in he received correction from the paedagogue-instrument. If he thumped affirmative or negative, he was wrong.

. . . In the cellar, it was the turn for the drum. Dr. Middleton was tongue-tied there. Sir Willoughby gave the history of his wine in heads of chapters; whence it came to the family originally, and how it had come down to him in the quantity to be seen. "Curiously, my grandfather, who inherited it, was a water-drinker. My father died early."

"Indeed! Dear me!" the doctor ejaculated in astonishment and condolence. The former glanced at the contrariety of

man, the latter embraced his melancholy destiny. . . . Dr. Middleton's musings were coloured by the friendly vision of glasses of the great wine; his mind was festive; it pleased him, and he chose to indulge in his whimsical-robustious, grandiose-airy style of thinking: from which the festive mind will sometimes take a certain print that we cannot obliterate immediately. . . .

He liked Sir Willoughby's tone in ordering the servant at his heels to take up "those two bottles": it prescribed, without overdoing it, a proper amount of caution, and it named an agreeable number.

Watching the man's hand keenly, he said,—

"But here is the misfortune of a thing super-excellent:—not more than one in twenty will do it justice."

Sir Willoughby replied: "Very true, sir, and I think we may pass over the nineteen."

"Women, for example: and most men."

"This wine would be a sealed book to them."

"I believe it would. It would be a grievous waste."

"Vernon is a claret-man: and so is Horace De Craye. They are both below the mark of this wine. They will join the ladies. Perhaps you and I, sir, might remain together."

"With the utmost goodwill on my part."

"I am anxious for your verdict, sir."

"You shall have it, sir, and not out of harmony with the chorus preceding me, I can predict. Cool, not frigid." Dr. Middleton summed the attributes of the cellar on quitting it: "North side and South. No musty damp. A pure air! Everything requisite. One might lie down oneself and keep sweet here."

Of all our venerable British of the two Isles professing a suckling attachment to an ancient port-wine, lawyer, doctor, squire, rosy admiral, city merchant, the classic scholar is he

whose blood is most nuptial to the webbed bottle. The reason must be that he is full of the old poets. He has their spirit to sing with, and the best that Time has done on earth to feed it. He may also perceive a resemblance in the wine to the studious mind, which is the obverse of our mortality, and throws off acids and crusty particles in the piling of the years, until it is fulgent by clarity. Port hymns to his conservatism. It is magical: at one sip he is off swimming in the purple flood of the ever-youthful antique. . . .

Meanwhile Dr. Middleton sipped.

After the departure of the ladies, Sir Willoughby had practised a studied curtness upon Vernon and Horace. .

"You drink claret," he remarked to them, passing it round. "Port, I think, Dr. Middleton? The wine before you may serve for a preface. We shall have *your* wine in five minutes."

The claret jug empty, Sir Willoughby offered to send for more. De Craye was languid over the question. Vernon rose from the table.

"We have a bottle of Dr. Middleton's port coming in," Willoughby said to him.

"Mine, you call it?" cried the Rev. Doctor.

"It's a royal wine that won't suffer sharing," said Vernon.

"We'll be with you if you go into the billiard room, Vernon."

"I shall hurry my drinking of good wine for no man," said the Rev. Doctor.

"Horace?"

"I'm beneath it, ephemeral, Willoughby. I am going to the ladies."

Vernon and De Craye retired upon the arrival of the wine; and Dr. Middleton sipped. He sipped and looked at the owner of it.

"Some thirty dozen?" he said.

"Fifty."

The doctor nodded humbly.

"I shall remember, sir," his host addressed him, "when-ever I have the honour of entertaining you, I am cellarer of that wine."

The Rev. Doctor set down his glass. "You have, sir, in some sense, an enviable post. It is a responsible one, if that be a blessing. On you it devolves to retard the day of the last dozen."

"Your opinion of the wine is favourable, sir?"

"I will say this:—shallow souls run to rhapsody:—I will say, that I am consoled for not having lived ninety years back, or at any period but the present, by this one glass of your ancestral wine."

"I am careful of it," Sir Willoughby said modestly; "still its natural destination is to those who can appreciate it. You do, sir."

"Still, my good friend, still! It is a charge: it is a possession, but part in trusteeship. Though we cannot declare it an entailed estate, our consciences are in some sort pledged that it shall be a succession not too considerably diminished."

"You will not object to drink it, sir, to the health of your grandchildren. And may you live to toast them in it on their marriage day!"

"You colour the idea of a prolonged existence in seductive hues. Ha! It is wine for Tithonus. This wine would speed him to the rosy morning—aha!"

"I will undertake to sit you through it up to morning," said Sir Willoughby, innocent of the Bacchic nuptiality of the allusion.

Dr. Middleton eyed the decanter. There is a grief in gladness, for a premonition of our mortal state. The amount of wine in the decanter did not promise to sustain the starry

roof of night and greet the dawn. "Old wine, my friend, denies us the full bottle!"

"Another bottle is to follow."

"No!"

"It is ordered."

"I protest."

"It is uncorked."

"I entreat."

"It is decanted."

"I submit. But, mark, it must be honest partnership. You are my worthy host, sir, on that stipulation. Note the superiority of wine over Venus!—I may say, the magnanimity of wine; our jealousy turns on him that will not share! . . ."

GEORGE MEREDITH: *The Egoist*

Children in Church

I WAITED till the procession had gone in, and then I found that the tail of it was composed of poor Lord Charles Herries' children, Gus, Flora and Archy, with their nurse.

If a bachelor is worth his salt, he will make himself useful. I saw that nurse was in distress and anxious, so I stayed with her.

Archy was really as good as gold till he met with his accident. He walked up the steps with nurse as quiet as possible. But even at first I began to get anxious about Gus and Flora. They were excited. Gus wouldn't walk up the steps; but he put his two heels together, and jumped up them one at a time, and Flora walked backwards, looking at him sarcastically. At the top step but one Gus stumbled; whereupon

Flora said, "Goozlemy, goozelemy, goozelemy."

And Gus said, "You wait a minute, my lady, till we get into church," after which awful speech I felt as if I was smoking in a powder magazine.

I was put into a pew with Gus, and Flora, and Archy. Nurse, in her modesty, went into the pew behind us.

I am sorry to say that these dear children, with whom I had had no previous acquaintance, were very naughty. The ceremony began by Archy getting too near the edge of his hassock, falling off, pitching against the pew door, bursting it open, and flying out among the free seats, head foremost. Nurse, a nimble and dexterous woman, dashed out and caught him up, and actually got him out of the church door before he had time to fetch his breath for a scream. Gus and Flora were left alone with me.

Flora had a great scarlet and gold church service. As soon as she opened it, she disconcerted me by saying aloud, to an imaginary female friend, "My dear, there is going to be a collection; and I have left my purse on the piano."

At this time, also, Gus, seeing that the business was well begun, removed to the further end of the pew, sat down on the hassock, and took from his trousers' pocket a large tin trumpet.

I broke out all over in a cold perspiration as I looked at him. He saw my distress, and putting it to his lips, puffed out his cheeks. Flora administered comfort to me. She said, "You are looking at that foolish boy. Perhaps he won't blow it after all. He mayn't if you don't look at him. At all events, he probably won't blow it till the organ begins; and then it won't matter so much. . . ."

And so I looked up to the east end. And I saw the two couples kneeling before the clergyman. And when I, knowing everything as I did, saw Charles kneeling beside Mary

Corby, with Lord Ascot, great, burly, brutal giant, standing behind him, I said something which is not in the marriage service of the Church of England. After it all, to see him and her kneeling so quietly there together! We were all happy enough that day. But I don't think that any one was much happier than I. For I knew more than any one. And also, three months from that time, I married my present wife, Eliza Humby. And the affair had only been arranged two days. So I was in good spirits.

At least I should have been, if it had not been for Lord Charles Herries' children. I wish those dear children (not meaning them any harm) had been, to put it mildly, at play on the village green, that blessed day.

When I looked at Gus again, he was still on the hassock, threatening propriety with his trumpet. I hoped for the best. Flora had her prayer-book open, and was playing the piano on each side of it, with her fingers. After a time, she looked up at me, and said out loud—

"I suppose you have heard that Archy's cat has kittened?"

I said, "No."

"Oh yes, it has," she said. "Archy harnessed it to his meal cart, which turns a mill, and plays music when the wheels go round; and it ran downstairs with the cart; and we heard the music playing as it went; and it kittened in the wood-basket immediately afterwards; and Alwright says she don't wonder at it; and no more do I; and the steward's room boy is going to drown some. But you mustn't tell Archy, because, if you do, he won't say his prayers; and if he don't say his prayers, he will," etc., etc. Very emphatically and in a loud tone of voice.

This was very charming. If I could only answer for Gus, and keep Flora busy, it was wildly possible that we might pull through. If I had not been a madman, I should have

noticed that Gus had disappeared.

He had. And the pew door had never opened, and I was utterly unconscious. Gus had crawled up, on all-fours, under the seat of the pew, until he was opposite the calves of his sister's legs, against which calves, *horresco referens*, he put his trumpet and blew a long, shrill blast. Flora behaved very well and courageously. She only gave one long wild shriek, as from a lunatic in a padded cell at Bedlam, and then, hurling her prayer-book at him, she turned round and tried to kick him in the face.

This was the culminating point of my misfortunes. After this, they behaved better. I represented to them that every one was just coming out of the vestry, and that they had better fight it out in the carriage going home. Gus only made an impertinent remark about Flora's garters, and Flora only drew a short, but trenchant, historical parallel between Gus and Judas Iscariot; when the brides and bridegrooms came down the aisle, and we all drove off to Charles's house in Eaton Square.

HENRY KINGSLEY: *Ravenshoe*

A Homecoming

"CHRISTMAS is coming and Bruno," exclaimed Lucille, on the morning of Christmas-eve, as she worked with Miss Marjorum, Tompion, and Elizabeth May at the decoration of hall, staircase, and corridor. Lord Ingleshaw objected to holly and ivy in the rooms in which he lived—clocks and lamps and picture-frames embowered in greenery gave him an uncomfortable feeling.

"Make the hall and corridor as festive as you please, my

dear," he said, "but don't let me see a Madonna by Guido staring at me like an owl out of an ivy bush, or my Sèvres china made a mere vehicle for the exhibition of holly berries."

"It may be vulgar, old-fashioned, Philistine," said Lucille, as she twisted an elaborate wreath of variegated ivies and glittering red berries round the massive oaken newel at the head of the staircase; "but I should like Bruno to feel that it is Christmas-time directly he enters the castle. . . ."

The Earl and Bruno, who were coming from the North that day, were not expected until dusk. It would be afternoon tea-time before they could arrive, the most delightful time at which to welcome them. Lucille's morning-room was glorious with hot-house flowers, bright with the soft, red firelight, tempered by a ground-glass screen. The quaint little tables—Queen Anne, Japanese, Dundee—were daintily arranged by Lucille's own hands. Each low luxurious chair was in its most appropriate place; the fair young *châtelaine* was looking her loveliest in a dark-blue velvet gown, all slashed and puffed with deepest red, and with a red-satin petticoat just peeping below the dark blue of the skirt. It was one of Lucille's trousseau gowns; and Tompion had told her that it was very unlucky to wear it—a tampering with futurity that must result in something awful; but Lucille was bent on looking her very best when Bruno and she met, after an agonising separation of nearly three weeks. The gown fitted her as never gown had fitted her before; and she stood in front of the cheval-glass innocently admiring herself.

"Well, Lady Lucille, it *do* give you a figure," exclaimed Tompion; "but for all that, I shouldn't like to wear it if I was you. I should feel I was flying in the face of Fate. . . ."

Lucille waited for the returning travellers alone in the winter gloaming, Miss Marjorum having discreetly gone to

afternoon tea at the Vicarage. She sat a little way from the shaded hearth with an unheeded book in her lap, listening for the ring of wheels and horses' hoofs upon the frost-bound road. There it was at last; and then a sonorous peal at the big bell. Should she go to meet them? Had it been her father alone who was returning, she would have flown to the hall, and would have been in his arms before he could take off his overcoat. Had it been the Bruno of old days, she would have run to the head of the staircase to give him a laughing welcome. But a new sense of shyness restrained the betrothed bride. . . .

"Well, little lady, here you are at last!" said Lord Ingleshaw, as he and Bruno came into the firelight, bringing the frosty outdoor atmosphere with them. "What a deathlike quiet there is in the house—almost like coming into a tomb!"

"Is that all the praise Lucille is to get for her Christmas decorations?" asked Bruno, when he and his betrothed had kissed, and she stood shyly at his side, hardly daring to look up at his face. "I thought the hall and staircase looked lovely. . . ."

He drew Lucille a little nearer to him as he spoke, the twilight favouring such gentle caresses. He had come back to Ingleshaw determined to be very happy, to value to the uttermost this treasure of a pure and lovely woman's love which Providence had given him. What could he ever have better in life than this perfect blessing, this constant incentive to good deeds and holy thoughts, this perpetual inspiration, this second conscience walking at his side and guiding his steps, and always pointing upward?

"Look at him, Lucille! You see before you the member for the North-Eastern division of Smokeshire," said the Earl, laying his hand on Bruno's shoulder. "How does he carry his dignity? Do you think he has grown?"

"Miss Majorum will be sure to say so," answered Lucille laughing; "or, at any rate, she will declare that he has expanded."

"His pockets have had to expand considerably, I can assure you," said her father. "Now that legislation has done its uttermost to insure the incorruptibility of the electors, elections are just a little more expensive than they were in the days of rank rottenness. The voters are just as greedy, and they are not half so candid."

"Have you ever observed anything of the professional beauty about me, Lucille?" asked Bruno.

"Well, not exactly."

"Yet I assure you there was as much eagerness to photograph me as if I had been the Lily herself. All the local photographers fell upon me like a pack of hounds. They told me it was customary for the member to be photographed; and it was furthermore customary for him to have his photograph enlarged by a twenty-guinea process, and provided with a handsome frame. The high-souled creatures would have scorned to accept sixpence in the beaten way of bribery; but they all wanted to run me in for forty pounds worth of photography. And this was only typical of the general sentiments."

". . . But if you looked at things in such a Roman manner, and steadfastly refused to bribe, how was it you spent so much money?" asked Lucille, much puzzled.

"Ah, how indeed? You see I had an agent."

"And he bribed for you?"

"He spent the money—on electioneering expenses. But now I am a member of the British Senate, and I am going to set about righting the wrongs of the universe. Is not that a great privilege?"

"I am very proud to think your talents will be of use in

the world," said Lucille, seeing him, in the middle distance of life, as Prime Minister. "But members of Parliament are never at home of an evening, are they?" she added regretfully.

"O we must try to get the early-closing movement adopted at St. Stephen's. We ought, at any rate, to have our Wednesday evenings and our Saturday afternoons, like the counter-jumpers in small country towns."

A footman brought in lamps, while another brought the tea-tray; and Lucille's attention for the next five minutes was occupied with the delight of pouring out tea for the two people she loved best in the world. . . .

M. E. BRADDON: *Flower and Weed*

Making Toffee

WE are in the schoolroom, the big, bare schoolroom, that has seen us all—that is still seeing some of us—unwillingly dragged, and painfully goaded up the steep slopes of book learning. Outside, the March wind is roughly hustling the dry brown trees, and pinching the diffident green shoots, while the round and rayless sun of late afternoon is staring from behind the elm twigs in at the long maps on the wall, in at the high chairs—tall of back, cruelly tiny of seat, off whose rungs we have kicked all the paint—in at the green baize table, richly freaked with ink-splashes. Hardly less red than the sun's, are our burnt faces, gathered about the fire.

The fire has no flame—only a glowing, ruddy heart on which the bright brass saucepan sits; and kneeling before it, stirring the mess with a long iron spoon is Barbara. Algy . . . is grating a lemon. Bobby is buttering soup plates. The

Brat—the Brat always takes his ease if he can, is peeling almonds, fishing delicately for them in a cup of hot water with his finger and thumb; and I, Nancy, am reading the receipt aloud, out of a greasy dogs'-eared cookery book, which, since it came into our hands, has been the innocent father of many a hideous compound. Tou Tou alone, in consideration of her youth, is allowed to be a spectator. She sits on the edge of the table, 'swinging her thin legs, and kicking her feet together.

Certainly we deteriorate in looks as we go downwards. In Barbara we made an excellent start; few families a better one, though we say it that should not. Although in Algy there was a slight falling off, it was not much to complain of. But I am sensibly uglier than Algy—(as indeed he has, on several occasions, dispassionately remarked to me); the Brat than me; Bobby than the Brat; and so steadily on, till we reach our nadir of unhandsomeness in Tou Tou. Tou Tou is our climax and we confidently defy our neighbours and acquaintances to outdo her.

Hapless young Tou Tou! made up of the thinnest legs, the widest mouth, the invisiblest nose and over visiblest ears that ever went to the composition of a child of twelve years.

"Keep stirring always! You must take care that it does not stick to the bottom!" say I, closing the receipt-book and speaking on my own account; but still as one having authority.

"All very well to say 'Keep stirring always,' " answers Barbara, turning round a face unavoidably pretty, even though at the present moment deeply flame-coloured; eyes still sweetly laughing with gay good-humour, even though half burnt out of her head, to answer me, "but if you had been stirring as long as I have, you would wonder that you had any arm left to stir with, however feebly. Here, one of

you boys take a turn. You, Brat, you never do anything for your living!"

The Brat complies, though not with eagerness. They change occupations, the Brat stirs, and she fishes for almonds. Ten minutes pass: the toffee is done, and what is more, it really is toffee. The upshot of our cookery is in general so startlingly indifferent from what we had intended, that the result in the present case takes us by surprise. We all prove practically that in the words of the receipt-book it "breaks clear between the teeth, without sticking to them." It is poured into Bobby's soup plate and we have thrown up the window sashes and set it on the ledge to cool. The searching wind blows in, dry and biting. Now it is rushing in a violent current through the room, for the door has opened. Mother enters.

RHODA BROUGHTON: *Nancy*

To Help with the Housework

WHILE yet many score yards off, other rhythmic sounds than those she had quitted became audible to her; sounds that she knew well—so well. They were a regular series of thumpings from the interior of the house, occasioned by the violent rocking of a cradle upon a stone floor, to which movement a feminine voice kept time by singing, in a vigorous gallopade, the favourite ditty of "The Spotted Cow"—

I saw her lie do'-own in yon'-der green gro'-ove;
Come, love!' and I'll tell' you where!'

The cradle-rocking and the song would cease simultaneously for a moment, and an exclamation at highest vocal

pitch would take the place of the melody.

“God bless thy dimmed eyes! And thy waxen cheeks! And thy cherry mouth! And thy Cubit’s thighs! And every bit o’ thy blessed body!”

After this invocation the rocking and singing would recommence, and the “Spotted Cow” proceed as before. So matters stood when Tess opened the door, and paused upon the mat within it surveying the scene.

The interior, in spite of the melody, struck upon the girl’s senses with an unspeakable dreariness. From the holiday gaieties of the field—the white gowns, the nosegays, the willow-wands, the whirling movements on the green, the flash of gentle sentiment towards the stranger—to the yellow melancholy of this one-candled spectacle, what a step! Besides the jar of contrast there came to her a chill of self-reproach that she had not returned sooner, to help her mother in these domesticities, instead of indulging herself out-of-doors.

There stood her mother amid the group of children, as Tess had left her, hanging over the Monday washing-tub, which had now, as always, lingered on to the end of the week. Out of that tub had come the day before—Tess felt it with a dreadful sting of remorse—the very white frock upon her back which she had so carelessly greened about the skirt on the damping grass—which had been wrung up and ironed by her mother’s own hands.

As usual, Mrs. Durbeyfield was balanced on one foot beside the tub, the other being engaged in the aforesaid business of rocking her youngest child. The cradle-rockers had done hard duty for so many years, under the weight of so many children, on that flagstone floor, that they were worn nearly flat, in consequence of which a huge jerk accompanied each swing of the cot, flinging the baby from side to side like a

weaver's shuttle, as Mrs. Durbeyfield, excited by her song, trod the rocker with all the spring that was left in her after a long day's seething in the suds.

Nick-knock, nick-knock, went the cradle; the candle-flame stretched itself tall, and began jiggling up and down; the water dribbled from the matron's elbows, and the song galloped on to the end of the verse, Mrs. Durbeyfield regarding her daughter the while. Even now, when burdened with a young family, Joan Durbeyfield was a passionate lover of tune. No ditty floated into Blackmoor Vale from the outer world but Tess's mother caught up its notation in a week.

There still faintly beamed from the woman's features something of the freshness, and even the prettiness, of her youth; rendering it probable that the personal charms which Tess could boast of were in main part her mother's gift, and therefore unknighly, unhistorical.

"I'll rock the cradle for 'ee, mother," said the daughter gently. "Or I'll take off my best frock and help you wring up? I thought you had finished long ago."

Her mother bore Tess no ill-will for leaving the housework to her single-handed efforts for so long; indeed, Joan seldom upbraided her thereon at any time, feeling but slightly the lack of Tess's assistance whilst her instinctive plan for relieving herself of her labours lay in postponing them. To-night, however, she was even in a blither mood than usual. There was a dreaminess, a preoccupation, an exaltation in the maternal look which the girl could not understand.

"Well, I'm glad you've come," her mother said, as soon as the last note had passed out of her. "I want to go and fetch your father; but what's more'n that, I want to tell 'ee what have happened. Y'll be fess enough, my poppet, when th'st

know!" (Mrs. Durbeyfield habitually spoke the dialect; her daughter, who had passed the sixth standard in the national school under a London-trained mistress, spoke two languages; the dialect of home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality.)

"Since I've been away?" Tess asked.

"Ay!"

"Had it anything to do with father's making such a mommet of himself in thik carriage this afternoon? Why did 'er? I felt inclined to sink into the ground with shame!"

"That wer all part of the larry! We've been found to be the greatest gentlefolk in the whole county—reaching all back long before Oliver Grumble's time—to the days of the pagan Turks—with monuments, and vaults, and crests, and 'scutcheons, and the Lord knows what all. In Saint Charles's days we was made Knights o' the Royal Oak, our real name being d'Urberville! . . . Don't that make your bosom plim? 'Twas on this account that your father rode home in the vlee; not because he'd been drinking, as people supposed."

THOMAS HARDY: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

A Parting

THE auctioneer selling the old horses in the field outside could be heard saying, "Now this is the last lot—now who'll take the last lot for a song? Shall I say forty shillings? 'Tis a very promising brood-mare, a trifle over five years old, and nothing the matter with the hoss at all, except that she's a little holler in the back and had her left eye knocked out by the kick of another, her own sister, coming along the road."

"For my part I don't see why men who have got wives, and don't want 'em, shouldn't get rid of 'em as these gipsy fellows do their old horses," said the man in the tent. "Why shouldn't they put 'em up and sell 'em by auction to men who are in want of such articles? Hey? Why, begad, I'd sell mine this minute if anybody would buy her!"

"There's them that would do that," some of the guests replied, looking at the woman, who was by no means ill-favoured. . . .

The fuddled young husband stared for a few seconds at this unexpected praise of his wife, half in doubt of the wisdom of his own attitude. . . . But he speedily lapsed into his former conviction, and said harshly—

"Well then, now is your chance; I am open to an offer for this gem o' creation."

She turned to her husband and murmured, "Michael, you have talked this nonsense in public places before. A joke is a joke, but you may make it once too often, mind!"

. . . But a quarter of an hour later the man, who had gone on lacing his furmity more and more heavily, though he was either so strong-minded or such an intrepid toper that he still appeared fairly sober, recurred to the old strain, as in a musical fantasy the instrument fetches up the original theme. "Here—I am waiting to know about this offer of mine. The woman is no good to me. Who'll have her?"

The company had by this time decidedly degenerated, and the renewed inquiry was received with a laugh of appreciation. The woman whispered; she was imploring and anxious: "Come, come, it is getting dark, and this nonsense won't do. If you don't come along, I shall go without you. Come!"

She waited and waited; yet he did not move. In ten minutes the man broke in upon the desultory conversation of the furmity drinkers with, "I asked this question, and

nobody answered to't. Will any Jack Rag or Tom Straw among ye buy my goods?"

The woman's manner changed, and her face assumed the grim shape and colour of which mention has been made.

"Mike, Mike," said she; "this is getting serious! —O, too serious!"

"Will anybody buy her?" said the man.

"I wish somebody would," said she firmly. "Her present owner is not at all to her liking!"

"Nor you to mine," said he. "So we are agreed about that. Gentlemen, you hear? It's an agreement to part. She shall take the girl if she wants to, and go her ways. I'll take my tools, and go my ways. 'Tis simple as Scripture history. Now then, stand up, Susan, and show yourself."

"Don't, my chiel," whispered a buxom staylace dealer in voluminous petticoats, who sat near the woman; "yer good man don't know what he's saying."

The woman, however, did stand up. "Now, who's auctioneer?" cried the hay-trusser.

"I be," promptly answered a short man, with a nose resembling a copper knob, a damp voice, and eyes like button-holes. "Who'll make an offer for this lady?"

The woman looked on the ground, as if she maintained her position by a supreme effort of will.

"Five shillings," said someone, at which there was a laugh.

"No insults," said the husband. "Who'll say a guinea?"

Nobody answered; and the female dealer in staylaces interposed.

"Behave yerself moral, good man, for Heaven's love! Ah, what a cruelty is the poor soul married to! Bed and board is dear at some figures, 'pon my 'vation 'tis!"

"Set it high, auctioneer," said the trusser.

"Two guineas!" said the auctioneer; and no one replied.

"If they don't take her for that, in ten seconds they'll have to give more," said the husband. "Very well. Now auctioneer, add another."

"Three guineas—going for three guineas!" said the rheumy man.

"No bid?" said the husband. "Good Lord, why she's cost me fifty times the money, if a penny. Go on."

"Four guineas!" cried the auctioneer.

"I'll tell ye what—I won't sell her for less than five," said the husband, bringing down his fist so that the basins danced. "I'll sell her for five guineas to any man that will pay me the money, and treat her well; and he shall have her for ever, and never hear aught o' me. But she shan't go for less. Now then—five guineas—and she's yours. Susan, you agree?"

She bowed her head with absolute indifference.

"Five guineas," said the auctioneer, "or she'll be withdrawn. Do anybody give it? The last time. Yes or no?"

"Yes," said a loud voice from the doorway.

All eyes were turned. Standing in the triangular opening which formed the door of the tent was a sailor, who, unobserved by the rest, had arrived there within the last two or three minutes. A dead silence followed his affirmation.

"You say you do?" asked the husband, staring at him.

"I say so," replied the sailor.

"Saying is one thing, and paying is another. Where's the money?"

The sailor hesitated a moment, looked anew at the woman, came in, unfolded five crisp pieces of paper, and threw them down upon the table-cloth. They were Bank-of-England notes for five pounds. Upon the face of this he chinked down the shillings severally—one, two, three, four, five.

The sight of real money in full amount, in answer to a challenge for the same till then deemed slightly hypotheti-

cal, had a great effect upon the spectators. Their eyes became riveted upon the faces of the chief actors, and then upon the notes as they lay, weighted by the shillings, on the table. . . .

"Now," said the woman, breaking the silence, so that her dry voice sounded quite loud, "before you go further, Michael, listen to me. If you touch that money, I and this girl go with the man. Mind, it is a joke no longer."

"A joke? Of course it is not a joke!" shouted her husband, his resentment rising at her suggestion. "I take the money: the sailor takes you. That's plain enough. It has been done elsewhere—and why not here?"

"'Tis quite on the understanding that the young woman is willing," said the sailor blandly. "I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world."

"Faith, nor I," said her husband. "But she is willing, provided she can have the child. She said so only the other day when I talked o't!"

"That you swear?" said the sailor to her.

"I do," said she, after glancing at her husband's face and seeing no repentance there.

"Very well, she shall have the child, and the bargain's complete," said the trusser. He took the sailor's notes and deliberately folded them, and put them with the shillings in a high remote pocket, with an air of finality.

The sailor looked at the woman and smiled. "Come along!" he said kindly. "The little one too—the more the merrier!" She paused for an instant, with a close glance at him. Then dropping her eyes again, and saying nothing, she took up the child and followed him as he made towards the door. On reaching it, she turned, and pulling off her wedding-ring, flung it across the booth in the hay-trusser's face.

"Mike," she said, "I've lived with thee a couple of years, and had nothing but temper! Now I'm no more to 'ee; I'll

try my luck elsewhere. 'Twill be better for me and Elizabeth-Jane, both. So good-bye!"

Seizing the sailor's arm with her right hand, and mounting the little girl on her left, she went out of the tent sobbing bitterly.

THOMAS HARDY: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

A Frock

SHE had got a new frock never yet seen on. Well, verily and truly, quite so good as new. For Patty wore after Aunt Maria, who was really a-most so big as a house and her gowns so voluminous that when the rubbed places were taken out, there was plenty enough left to make for Patty, without skimping one morsel-bit. And Patty herself was never the maid to be hard on clothes. So soon as ever a body began to show shiny under the arms she sent it on to Cousin Selina to be cut up for the chieils. Such was Aunt Maria's wish impressively stated, because there were so many, you see, an' all wi' mouths to fill. And Patty was the soul of honour, doing towards Cousin Selina as she had a right to expect that Aunt Maria would do towards her. All of which, though Sophia heard none of it, must be taken to prove that the Winterheads of Charterhouse were a respectable race, with relations both rich and poor, and the double advantage of deriving lustre from one side, whilst upon the other they received respect.

The fame of Aunt Maria's wardrobe did not rest upon gowns handed on to Patty for frocks. How well she secretly upheld the dignity of the name of Winterhead and inde-

pendent means could never have been told had not the periodical publicity of the clothes-line held spell-bound an admiring world. Then to think of the sheets and table-linen she had a-got put away in drawers. There! let them that come after live so long as they mid, they could never need to buy.

But before the gossips of Winscombe had time, as it were, to look round, she had wrapped her chimney ornaments in paper, put trousers round the legs of her parlour chairs, put her linnet out to keep, pulled down the blinds, and locked up the garden hatch. In all the glory of a hired four-wheel trap she drove down street, waving her fat hand to the neighbours as she passed, and calling back that they wouldn't have the party wi'out her, and so she was bound to go to Charterhouse after all for Patty's twenty-first.

• WALTER RAYMOND: *Two Men o' Mendip*

A Difficult Request

THE last volume was written in fourteen days. In this achievement Reardon rose almost to heroic pitch, for he had much to contend with beyond the mere labour of composition. Scarcely had he begun when a sharp attack of lumbago fell upon him; for two or three days it was torture to support himself at the desk, and he moved about like a cripple. Upon this ensued headaches, sore throat, general enfeeblement. And before the end of the fortnight, it was necessary to think of raising another small sum of money; he took his watch to the pawnbroker's (you can imagine it would not stand as security for much), and sold a few more books. All this notwithstanding, here was the novel at length finished. When he had written "The End" he lay back, closed his eyes and

let Time pass in blankness for a quarter of an hour. . . .

"Amy, you will have to correct the proofs for me. Never as long as I live will I look upon a page of this accursed novel. It has all but killed me."

"The point is," replied Amy, "that here we have it complete. Pack it up and take it to the publishers' to-morrow morning."

"I will."

"And—you will ask them to advance you a few pounds?"

"I must."

But that undertaking was almost as hard to face as a re-writing of the last volume would have been. Reardon had such superfluity of sensitiveness that, for his own part, he would far rather have gone hungry than ask for money not legally his due. To-day there was no choice. In the ordinary course of business it would certainly be a month before he heard the publishers' terms, and perhaps the Christmas season might cause yet more delay. Without borrowing, he could not provide for the expenses of more than another week or two.

His parcel under his arm, he entered the ground-floor office, and desired to see that member of the firm with whom he had previously had personal relations. This gentleman was not in town; he would be away for a few days. Reardon left the manuscript, and came out into the street again.

He crossed, and looked up at the publishers' windows from the opposite pavement. "Do they suspect in what wretched circumstances I am? would it surprise them to know all that depends on that budget of paltry scribbling? I suppose not; it must be a daily experience with them. Well, I must write a begging letter."

. . . Was there no way of getting through the next few weeks? Rent, of course, would be due at Christmas, but that

payment might be postponed; it was only a question of buying food and fuel. Amy had offered to ask her mother for a few pounds; it would be cowardly to put this task upon her now that he had promised to meet the difficulty himself. What man in all London, could and would lend him money? He reviewed the list of his acquaintances, but there was only one to whom he could appeal with the slightest hope—that was Carter.

Half an hour later he entered that same hospital door through which, some years ago, he had passed as a half-starved applicant for work. The matron met him.

“Is Mr. Carter here?”

“No, sir. But we expect him any minute. Will you wait?”

. . . Nearly half an hour passed. It is the common experience of beggars to have to wait. Then Carter came in with a quick step; he wore a heavy ulster of the latest fashion, new gloves, a resplendent silk hat; his cheeks were rosy from the east wind.

“Ha, Reardon! How do? How do? Delighted to see you!”

“Are you very busy?”

“Well, no, not particularly. A few cheques to sign, and we’re just getting out our Christmas appeals. You remember? . . .”

“I should like to have a word with you.”

“Right you are!”

They went into a small inner room. Reardon’s pulse beat at fever-rate; his tongue was cleaving to his palate.

“What is it, old man?” asked the secretary, seating himself and flinging one of his legs over the other. “You look rather seedy, do you know. Why the deuce don’t you and your wife look us up now and then?”

“I’ve had a hard pull to finish my novel.”

“Finished, is it? I’m glad to hear that. When’ll it be out?”

I'll send scores of people to Mudie's after it."

"Thanks; but I don't think much of it, to tell you the truth."

"Oh, we know what that means."

Reardon was talking like an automaton. It seemed to him that he turned screws and pressed levers for the utterance of his next words.

"I may as well say at once what I've come for. Could you lend me ten pounds for a month—in fact until I get the money for my book?"

The secretary's countenance fell, though not to that expression of coldness which would have come naturally under the circumstances to a great many vivacious men. He seemed genuinely embarrassed.

"By Jove! I—confound it! To tell you the truth I haven't ten pounds to lend. Upon my word I haven't, Reardon! . . . I don't mind telling you, old man, that Edith and I have been pushing the pace rather. . . . We've only just been saying we should have to draw it mild for the rest of the winter. But I'm infernally sorry; upon my word I am."

"And I am sorry to have annoyed you by the unseasonable request."

"Devilish seasonable, Reardon, I assure you!" cried the secretary, and roared at his joke. It put him in a better temper than ever, and he said at length.

"I suppose a fiver wouldn't be much use?—For a month, you say?—I might manage a fiver, I think."

"It would be very useful. But on no account if——"

"No, no; I *could* manage a fiver for a month. Shall I give you a cheque?"

"I'm ashamed——"

"Not a bit of it. I'll go and write the cheque."

Reardon's face was burning. Of the conversation that

followed when Carter again presented himself he never recalled a word. The bit of paper was crushed together in his hand. Out in the street again, he all but threw it away, dreaming for the moment that it was a bus ticket or a patent medicine bill.

GEORGE GISSING: *New Grub Street*

Cottage Tea

HE departed, rode into the valley, climbed to the home of the Smerdons, where a sunset smile lit the whitewashed front, and presently took his place amongst them at table. Here reticence was impossible, and reserve not understood. Homely and unsubtle folk were these. They lived in a frank atmosphere of children. Life was punctuated by children. Their birthdays stood for the seasons and commemorations of the year. They had bred children, thought children, worked for children, and fought for children through more than a quarter of a century. They knew not pride, but took from anybody who would give. They were not at all alarmed at Mr. Shillingford, and greeted him without self-consciousness or self-deprecation. Mrs. Martha Smerdon was a barrel-shaped woman, still pleasant of face. Not a line could live on her plump countenance. She was of a sanguine complexion, with bright golden hair, still long enough to sit on—as she was proud of declaring. Her husband was tall, high-shouldered, and loose cheeked. He began to grow bald, and his expression belied him, for it was anxious, whereas in truth care seldom sat on his pillow.

Five children were sitting at the tea-table, but a special place had been reserved for Mr. Shillingford, and the young

people were walled off from it by a loaf, a large pot of blackberry jam, and a dish of home-made cakes.

"Us be all in a muck, same as ever, master," said Mrs. Smerdon genially; "but you won't mind that. 'Childer come first,' as granny says, 'for they'll have to do the work of the world when we'm past it.'"

"Us thought to see you a bit earlier in the afternoon," said Mr. Smerdon. "Have Whitelock took your hoss? He's been waiting around a good while."

"Our tea be thin after yours, I reckon; but you'll take us as you find us, I'm sure," declared the mistress of Bone Hill. "Of a Sunday, when I can, I put in a bit more; but when the home be holding ten mouths, and often twelve to sixteen, along o' goings and comings, us have got to count the tea-leaves, I do assure 'e."

Mr. Shillingford smiled upon the children, who went on eating regardless of him. He sipped his tea, took food, and marked the red evening light along the row of young heads.

The children were regarding the dish of cakes, and their round eyes sought their mother's.

"I've told the dears as they wasn't to have no goodies till you'd helped yourself," explained Martha Smerdon. "You see what obedient toads they be. Put a couple on your plate, master; then us'll give 'em the rest, and let 'em run off."

"I shan't want one," answered Gabriel.

The children had the cakes and departed. Mrs. Smerdon then enumerated their names, qualities, and distinctions.

"Our childer comed in two batches," she said. "Fust there was the grown-up lot, with Whitelock and Emma, as married Young Harry Hawke, and Jane, in service to Bag Park, and Ethel, the deaf one, to Plymouth, and Westover, the railway-engine stoker; and then I rested for five year—a most un-

heard-of thing, but a godsend to me, I'm sure. 'I was like a giant refreshed with wine,' so my husband said; and at it I went again, and these five come in nine years, not to name a pair of dead twins."

"They are nicely brought-up children. That thin boy's squint might be cured. The little girl is pretty—the blue-eyed one."

"Minnie—so she is, then, and Sibley likes her the best. But us have got no favourites, have we, father?"

Mr. Smerdon spoke.

"I like 'em on and off—according," he said. "Sometimes 'tis one pleases me special and sometimes 'tis another. They've all got a good slice of their mother in 'em. And what more should any child want?"

A thin voice quavered out of a dark corner behind a screen by the fire. It murmured something about the children, but Mr. Shillingford failed to catch the remark.

"'Tis only my wife's mother," explained Peter. "You needn't take no count of her. She'm mostly tootlish. . . ."

. . . They talked in a rambling, indecisive fashion, and at last Mr. Shillingford, feeling an increasing uneasiness, prepared to depart.

He looked at the window, where darkness gathered, and Martha understood him.

"You be finding it a thought stuffy in here, my dear? And so it is; but us have to keep the chamber emetically sealed for gran'mother. If a blast of fresh air reaches to her tubes, she coughs her soul up."

"Lives on peat smoke, you might almost say—my wife's mother do," said Peter Smerdon. "For five years she've bided in that chimbley corner, and only crawled out now and again of a summer noon. A regular, old bed-lier she'll be till she dies."

"Doctor says 'twill come as a thief in the night. But she's ready," said Mrs. Smerdon.

"I don't want to die," piped the ghostly voice from the corner.

Peter laughed.

"You see she can follow conversation quite clever like that, when you least expect it."

"She'll often chip in when we be talking about her. And then for days she'll be hidden from us in a cloud, and we don't know what she's dreaming about more'n the dead—may be not so well, for she'll often talk out loud to folk as have been long dust in their graves."

The physical and mental atmosphere of the Smerdons began to make Gabriel pant. He felt deeply concerned for the aged creature in the corner; he had not the imagination to enter into these lives; he desired heartily to be gone. He changed the conversation and said the thing that he had come to say.

"I hope this match will be a very happy and prosperous one. I think very well of Whitelock. He is an honourable and upright man. Time must decide what plans are made by me in the future. We shall see. My daughter, of course, inherits."

"Inherits what, master?" asked Mr. Smerdon. "What does she inherit? 'Inherit' be a great word in the ears of a small man."

"She inherits my estates."

"Oh—Blackslade? Nought else? They do say there's a bit of a rope round Blackslade's neck—a mortgage, in fact. Perhaps it ban't true?"

The other flushed.

"I object to my private affairs being discussed, Mr. Smerdon. It is not seemly."

"God forgive me, then," answered Peter, "for 'tis the last thing I meant. I was only going on for to say that our Whitelock be a proper nipper over money, and can make sixpence do the work of a shilling. I thought perhaps 'twould cheer you to know that. For, by all accounts, you'm one of they open-handed heroes that forget you've spent your cash, till you look round for it and find it gone. Now, I can say in all sober honesty that us don't know the meaning of money here at Bone Hill. It comes into my right hand and goes out of my left. My gold and silver be my wife and family—and my wife's mother yonder."

A gurgle came from behind the screen.

"In a word," summed up Martha, smiling, "we be poor as birds, and very near as cheerful. We've helped on the human race something wonderful with five boys and girls, and we ban't in the least shamed to remind our fellow-creatures that 'tis their duty to reward us. And you be a poor man, too—to say it without offence, my dear?"

"With only two maids and Blackslade all your own, I should have thought as you could have put by a pinch for a rainy day, or a daughter's wedding," continued Peter, "but that's your business, of course. And as you say she'll have the farm when you be gathered in. And if you make a clean breast to Whitelock about what be owing, you'll never repent it. For he'll set to work to straighten the figures—and beg, borrow or steal you out of your fix."

"I'm *not* in a—good gracious, man—how can you say these indecent things?" gasped Gabriel.

The nakedness of the Smerdon mind was only equalled by its absolute sincerity. But Mr. Shillingford resented such artlessness with all his might. No air-drawn dreams made atmosphere for them; no visions, no comely if nebulous imaginings ever softened the stark reality of their lives.

The master of Blackslade felt as one fallen among naked aborigines, who were stripping him of his clothes also. Their simple, innocent eyes went through him.

“‘Ondacent’!” echoed Mr. Smerdon. “Why for? I be only telling you that, though my Whitelock ain’t got any more money than your Sibley, yet he’s the sort that can be trusted to make it. I thought you and me was alike—just honest men, but no use to anybody where cash was the matter. I thought you muddled along up to Blackslade pretty much like I muddle on here to Bone Hill. I thought the only difference was that I’d managed to keep clear of debt, by living so hard as a fox lives, and that you, with your higher opinions, and bigger ideas, and famous havage, had outrun the constable a bit here and there. Of course, between friends I be talking—between men as will soon be relatives, you may say. God, He knows I wouldn’t tell like this outside our own families. Close as adders be me and Martha to the outer world. And who thinks the worse of you or me for being hard up? ’Tis the state to which it has pleased God to call nine men out of ten.”

“I must go,” said Mr. Shillingford, rising almost wildly as one under an incubus. “You mean well—I grant that you mean well, Smerdon. But you don’t understand. We must have a certain reserve—a certain—I hardly think that I can explain what I mean really. There are some things— In fact, we look at life from rather a different standpoint.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sure—too blunt and common for you, I’m fearing. We’ve got nought much to hide—me and Martha. Our little lot be out in the world.”

“For all to see and admire,” added Mrs. Smerdon.

“And we pay our rent, and only eight times in twenty-eight years have it been overdue,” she added.

“We shall get to understand each other better, master,”

concluded Peter. "You mark me, we shall grow very good neighbours, and a tower of strength to each other."

"We be thinking about the fine clothes for the wedding already," declared Mrs. Smerdon.

Her husband laughed.

"And we'm glad 'tis a boy and not a maid this time," he said. "For you've got to find the feast as best you can, neighbour. You'd bust your sides laughing if us told you how we was put to it when our Emma took Young Harry Hawke. And Timothy Turtle, to the 'Rugglestone Inn,' gave us four bottles of brown sherry as a gift. And we took it in the spirit 'twas offered and we don't forget, though I daresay he has."

Gabriel almost staggered when he returned to his horse; and then Whitelock Smerdon appeared.

"How do you like them? I hope they used you civilly, and as became them, Mr. Shillingford," he said.

"Yes, yes—all will be well. They have a remarkable power of coming to essentials," declared his future father-in-law. "They are a type of our old yeomanry—the people who live face to face with Nature, and are not frightened of her. There is much to learn from them."

"Especially mother," declared Whitelock. "She's a wonderful witty creature under her weight of flesh. And so brave as she's fat. The more you know her, the more you'll like her. And she says that Sibley's just perfection, and far too good for the likes of me!"

Mr. Shillingford rode away. The night air cooled his forehead and calmed his mind. He drank deeply of it, and endeavoured to correct his perspective. He wondered why the Smerdons had caused him such exquisite discomfort, and perceived that the atmosphere of reality, which they breathed so easily, was far too sharp for him. "My Sibley is marrying

into a family of honest savages," he said to himself. "But yet—never to have owed a penny, even at the cost of living like a pig! It has its majestic side, and I'm the last man to deny it. Only it is so easy for them. They are probably more comfortable living in that way than otherwise."

He marshalled his ideas, and thought of kind things to say, that he might give Sibley pleasure when they met at supper.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS: *Widcombe Fair*

Danger at the Door

THAT afternoon Dicky had suffered again. Two days earlier, tea and cake had been provided by a benevolent manager for all who attended the school. Consequently the attendance was excellent, and included Dicky. But his attempt to secrete a pocketful of cake for Em was reported by Bobby Roper; and Dicky was hauled forth, deprived of his plunder and expelled in disgrace. He waited outside and paid off the score fiercely, by the help of a very long and pliant cabbage stalk. But this afternoon Bill Bates, a boy a head taller than himself and two years older, had fallen on him suddenly in Lincoln Street, and, though Dicky fought desperately and kicked with much effect, had dealt him a thrashing that left him bruised, bleeding, dusty, and crying with rage and pain. This was the hunchback's doing without a doubt. Dicky limped home, but was something comforted by an accident in Shoreditch High Street, whereby a coster's barrow-load of cough-drops were scattered in the mud. For while the carman and the coster flew at each other's name and address and defamed each other's eyes and mother, Dicky gathered up a handful of cough-drops, muddy, it is true, but easy to

wipe. And so he made for home more cheerfully disposed: till the sight of the Ropers' old clock brought the hunchback to mind once more, and in bitter anger he resolved to search for him forthwith, and pass on the afternoon's hiding, with interest.

As he emerged into the street, a hand was reached to catch him, which he dodged by instinct. He rushed back upstairs, and emptied his pockets, stowing away in a safe corner the rest of the cough-drops, the broken ruin he called his knife, some buttons and pieces of string, a bit of chalk, three little pieces of slate pencil and two marbles. Then he went down again into the street, confident in his destitution, and watched, forgetting the hunchback in the excitement of the spectacle.

The loafers from the corners had conceived a sudden notion of co-operation, and had joined forces to the array of twenty or thirty. Confident in their numbers, they swept the street, stopping every passenger-man, woman or child—and emptying all pockets. A straggler on the outskirts of the crowd, a hobbledehoy like most of the rest, had snatched at but had lost Dicky, and was now busy, with four or five others, rolling a woman, a struggling heap of old clothes and skinny limbs, in the road. It was Biddy Flynn, too old and worn for anything but honest work, who sold oranges and nuts from a basket and who had been caught on her way out for her evening's trade in High Street. She was a fortunate capture, being a lone woman with all her possessions about her. Under her skirt, and tied round her waist with string, she kept her money-bag; and it was soon found and dragged away, yielding two and eightpence farthing and a lucky shoe-tip, worn round and bright. She had, moreover, an old brass brooch; but unfortunately her wedding ring, worn to pin-wire, could not be got past the knotted knuckle—though it

would have been worth little in any case. So Biddy Flynn exhausted with plunging and screaming, was left, and her empty basket was flung at her. She staggered away, wailing and rolling her head, with her hand to the wall; and the gang, sharing out, sucked oranges with relish, and turned to fresh exploits. Dicky watched from Jago Court passage.

Business slackened for a little while, and the loafers were contemplating a raid in force on Mother Gapp's till, when a grown lad ran in pell-mell from Luck Row with a square parcel clipped under his arm—a parcel of aspect well known to the fat's a-running boys—a parcel that meant tobacco. He was collared at once.

"Stow it, Bill!" he cried breathlessly, recognising his captor. "The bloke's a-comin'!"

But half a dozen hands were on his plunder, it was snatched away, and he was flung back on the flags. There was a clatter on the stones of Luck Row, and a light van came rattling into Old Jago Street, the horse galloping, the carman lashing and shouting:—"Stop 'im! Stop thief!"

The sight was so novel that, for a moment, the gang merely stared and grinned. This man must be a greenhorn—new to the neighbourhood—to venture a load of goods up Luck Row. And it was tobacco, too. He was pale and flustered and he called wildly as he looked this way and that:—

"A man's stole somethin' auf my van. Where's 'e gawn?"

"No good, guvnor," cried one. "The ball's stopped rollin'. You're lawst 'im."

"My Gawd!" said the man in a sweat, "I'm done. There's two quids worth o' 'bacca—an' I on'y got the job o' Monday—bin out nine munse!"

"Was it a parcel like this 'ere?" asked another, chuckling and lifting a second packet over the tailboard.

"Yus—put it down! Gawd—wotcher up to? Ere—'elp! 'elp!"

The gang were over the van, guffawing and flinging out the load. The carman yelled aloud and fought desperately with his whip—Bill Hanks is near blind of an eye now from one cut; but he was the worse for it. For he was knocked off the van in a heap, and, as he lay, they cleared his pockets and pulled off his boots; those that had caught the sting of the whip kicking him about the head till it but shifted in the slime at the stroke, an inanimate lump.

There was talk of how to deal with the horse and van. To try to sell these was too large a job and too risky. So, as it was growing dusk, the senseless carman was put on the floor of the van, the tailboard was raised, and one of the gang led the horse away, to lose the whole thing in the busy streets.

ARTHUR MORRISON: *A Child of the Jago*

Callers

HE let himself in with his latch-key. He went moodily into the dining-room and got out the plans to look at them. He had a vague hope that there would prove to be only ten bedrooms. But he found there were still eleven. He became aware of Ann standing over him. "Look 'ere, Artie!" said Ann.

He looked up and found her holding a number of white oblongs.

His eyebrows rose.

"It's Callers," said Ann.

He put his plans aside slowly, and took and read the cards

in silence, with a sort of solemnity. Callers! then perhaps he wasn't to be left out of the world after all. Mrs. G. Porrett Smith; Miss Porrett Smith; Miss Mabel Porrett Smith; and two smaller cards of the Rev. G. Porrett Smith. "Lor!" he said. "*Clergy!*"

"There was a lady," said Ann, "and two growed-up gels—all dressed up!"

"And 'im?"

"There wasn't no 'im."

"Not—?" He held out the little card.

"No. There was a lady and two young ladies."

"But—these cards! Whad they go and leave these two little cards with the Rev. G. Smith on for? Not if 'e wasn't with 'em."

"'E wasn't with 'em."

"Not a little chap—dodgin' about be'ind the others? And didn't come in?"

"I didn't see no gentleman with them at all," said Ann.

"Rum!" said Kipps. A half-forgotten experience came back to him. "I know," he said, waving the reverend gentleman's card, "'e give 'em the slip; that's what he'd done. Gone off while they was rapping before you let 'em in. It's a fair call any'ow." He felt a momentary base satisfaction at his absence. "What did they talk about, Ann?"

There was a pause. "I didn't let 'em in," said Ann.

He looked up suddenly and perceived that something unusual was the matter with Ann. Her face was flushed, her eyes were red and hard.

"Didn't let 'em in?"

"No! They didn't come in at all."

He was too astonished for words.

"I answered the door," said Ann. "I'd been upstairs, 'namelling the floor. 'Ow was I to think about Callers,

Artie? We ain't never 'ad Callers, all the time we been 'ere. I'd sent Gwendolen out for a bref of fresh air, and there I was upstairs, 'namelling that floor she done so bad, so's to get it done before she came back. I thought I'd 'namel that floor and then get tea, and 'ave it quiet with you, toce and all, before she came back. 'Ow was I to think about Callers?"

She paused. "Well," said Kipps, "what then?"

"They came and rapped. 'Ow was I to know? I thought it was a tradesman or something. Never took my apron off, never wiped the 'namel off my 'ands—nothin'. There they was!"

She paused again. She was getting to the disagreeable part.

"Wad they say?" said Kipps.

"She says, 'Is Mrs. Kipps at home?' See? To me."

"Yes."

"And me all painty and no cap on and nothing, neither missis nor servant like. There, Artie, I could 'a sunk through the floor with shame, I really could. I could 'ardly get my voice. I couldn't think of nothing to say but just 'Not at 'ome,' and out of 'abit like I 'eld the tray. And they give me the cards and went, and 'ow I shall ever look that lady in the face again I don't know. . . . And that's all about it, Artie! They looked me up and down they did, and then I shut the door on 'em."

"Goo!" said Kipps.

Ann went and poked the fire needlessly with a passion-quivering hand.

"I wouldn't 'ave 'ad that 'appen for five pounds," said Kipps. "Clergyman and all!"

Ann dropped the poker into the fender with some *éclat*, and stood up and looked at her hot face in the glass. Kipps' disappointment grew. "You did ought to 'ave known better than that, Ann! You reely did."

He sat forward, cards in hand, with a deepening sense of social disaster. The plates were laid upon the table, toast sheltered under a cover at mid-fender, the teapot warmed beside it, and the kettle, just lifted from the hob, sang amidst the coals. Ann glanced at him for a moment, then stooped with the kettle-holder to wet the tea.

"Tcha!" said Kipps, with his mental state developing.

"I don't see it's any use getting in a state about it now," said Ann.

"Don't you! I do. See? 'Ere's these people, good people, want to 'sociate with us, and 'ere you go and slap 'em in the face!"

"I didn't slap 'em in the face."

"You do—practically. You slams the door in their face, and that's all we see of 'em ever! I wouldn't 'ave 'ad this 'appen not for a ten-pound note."

He rounded his regrets with a grunt. For a while there was silence, save for the little stir of Ann's few movements preparing tea.

"Tea, Artie," said Ann, handing him a cup.

Kipps took it.

"I put sugar *once*," said Ann.

"Oo, dash it! Oo cares?" said Kipps, taking an extraordinarily large additional lump with fury-quivering fingers, and putting his cup, with a slight excess of force, on the recess cupboard. "Oo cares?"

"I wouldn't 'ave 'ad that 'appen," he said, bidding steadily against accomplished things, "for twenty pounds."

He gloomed in silence through a long minute or so.

Then Ann said the fatal thing that exploded him.

"Artie!" she said.

"What?"

"There's Bud-tud Toce down there! By your foot!"

There was a pause, husband and wife regarded one another.

"Buttud Toce, indeed!" he said. "You go and mess up them callers, and then you try and stuff me up with Buttud Toce! Buttud Toce, indeed! 'Ere's our first chance of knowing any one that's at all fit to 'sociate with— Look 'ere, Ann! Tell you what it is—you got to return that call."

"Return that call!"

"Yes—you got to return that call. That's what you got to do! I know—" He waved his arm vaguely towards the miscellany of books in the recess. "It's in *Manners and Rools of Good S'ity*. You got to find jest 'ow many cards to leave, and you got to go and leave 'em. See?"

Ann's face expressed terror. "But, Artie! 'Ow *can* I?"

"'Ow *can* you? 'Ow *could* you? You got to do it, any'ow. They won't know you—not in your Bond Street 'at! If they do, they won't say nothing."

His voice assumed a note of entreaty. "You mus', Ann."

"I can't."

"You mus'."

"I can't, and I won't. Anything in reason I'll do, but face those people again I can't—after what 'as 'appened."

"You won't?"

"No! . . ."

"So there they go—orf! And we never see them again! And so it goes on! So it goes on! We don't know nobody, and we *shan't* know anybody! And you won't put yourself out not a little bit, or take the trouble to find out anything 'ow it ought to be done."

Terrible pause.

"I never ought to 'ave merried you, Artie, that's the troof."

"Oh, *don't* go into that!"

"I never ought to have merried you, Artie. I'm not equal

to the position. If you 'adn't said you'd drown yourself——" She choked.

"I don't see why you shouldn't *try*, Ann—I've improved. Why don't you? 'Stead of which you go sending out the servant and 'namelling floors, and then when visitors come——"

"'Ow was I to know about y'r old visitors?" cried Ann in a wail, and suddenly got up and fled from amidst their ruined tea, the tea of which "toce, all buttery" was to be the crown and glory.

Kipps watched her with a momentary consternation. Then he hardened his heart. "Ought to 'ave known better," he said, "goin' on like that!" He remained for a space rubbing his knees and muttering. He emitted scornfully, "I can't, and I won't." He saw her as the source of all his shames.

Presently, quite mechanically, he stooped down and lifted the flowery china cover. "Ter dash 'er Buttud Toce!" he shouted at the sight of it, and clapped the cover down again hard. . . .

When Gwendolen came back she perceived things were in a slightly unusual poise. Kipps sat by the fire in a rigid attitude, reading a casually selected volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and Ann was upstairs and inaccessible—to reappear at a later stage with reddened eyes. Before the fire, and still in a perfectly assimilable condition, was what was evidently an untouched supply of richly buttered toast under a cracked cover.

"They've 'ad a bit of a tiff," said Gwendolen, attending to her duties in the kitchen with her outdoor hat still on, and her mouth full. "They're rummuns—if ever! My eye!"

And she took another piece of Ann's generously buttered toast.

An At Home

THE night was dark and still—so dark that above the tree-tops all was a soft, abysmal blank, so still that the Japanese lanterns scarcely swung on their strings among the apple-trees, and the leaves almost forgot to rustle. From the tent in the corner of the little garden (little, but large for a garden in London) the quaint, rapturous music of the Hungarian band floated in fitful extravagance, now wildly dominating, now graciously accompanying the murmur of many voices, the mingled pace of feet, and the lingering sweep of silken skirts upon the shadowed grass. The light streamed in broad, electric rays from the open windows of the low, wide house, and from the tall double doors of the studio, which had been added at the side, broken continually by the silhouettes of guests who entered the rooms or sought the cooler air outside, and dulling to the quiet glow of old stained glass the rich radiance of the fantastic coloured lanterns.

It was one of the series of summer evenings on which, according to the cards which had been so widely circulated, Mr. and Mrs. Lightmark were “at home” to their friends and to their friends’ friends; and Rainham, who was a late arrival at the elaborate house in Grove Road, was able after a time to recognise many familiar faces, some of them almost forgotten, among those who had elected to be present. The rooms, in spite of the outlet afforded by the garden, were all surprisingly full; and after a hurried exchange of greetings, which Eve’s duties as hostess had compelled her to curtail, he had passed through a jungle of brilliant toilettes and unfamiliar figures into the newly-built, bright studio, where he had been told he would find his friend. He had abundant leisure to corroborate the first impression of a splendour for which he was hardly prepared, which had seized him when

he entered the hall and surrendered his coat to a courteous servant in livery, before Lightmark, radiant and flushed with success, singled him out in the corner to which he had retreated in loneliness.

"So glad to see you, old man! we were hoping you would turn up. Better late than never. Isn't it a crush? I assure you our evenings are becoming quite an institution. You will find scores of people you know here. Excuse my leaving you. Not much like the old studio days, eh? Afternoon tea with Copal's cups and saucers, and Mrs. Thingumy's tea-cakes. Your friend Lady Garnett is here somewhere—I'll be shot if I know where. Try the garden; you can get out this way. See you again later."

"All right, Dick," he answered with equanimity, smiling with a little inward amusement; "you look after your people. I will find my way about."

As he made his way discreetly among the little groups of people who strolled processionally along the gravel walks and beneath the trees, or disposed themselves in basket chairs upon the lawns, feeling himself vaguely exhilarated by the not too abstruse music of the posturing fiddlers, his eyes caressed by the soft glow of the Japanese lanterns, strung like antique jewelled necklets against the almost tangible blackness of the night, he found himself listening with an half-malicious amusement to the commonplace of the conversational formulae affected by the young world of society, the well-worn, patched-up questions, the anticipated answers. It was very little changed since the time when he had not yet emancipated himself from the dreary bondage of such functions. It was croquet then, lawn-tennis now; for the rest only the names were different. Presently he encountered McAllister, a solitary wanderer like himself, and they found themselves seats before long in the darkest corner of the

garden, where a few chairs had been placed, outside the radius of the lanterns, underneath a weeping willow.

"And they say painting doesn't pay," said the Scotchman, extending his long hands comprehensively, with a quiet chuckle.

ERNEST DOWSON and ARTHUR MOORE:
A Comedy of Masters

A Dinner

IN Swithin's orange and light-blue drawing-room, facing the Park, the round table was laid for twelve.

A cut-glass chandelier filled with lighted candles hung like a giant stalactite above its centre, radiating over large gilt-framed mirrors, slabs of marble on the tops of side-tables, and heavy gold chairs with crewel worked seats. Everything betokened that love of beauty so deeply implanted in each family which has had its own way to make into Society, out of the more vulgar heart of nature. Swithin had indeed an impatience of simplicity, a love of ormolu, which had always stamped him amongst his associates as a man of great, if somewhat luxurious taste; and out of the knowledge that no one could possibly enter his rooms without perceiving him to be a man of wealth, he had derived a solid and prolonged happiness such as perhaps no other circumstance in life had afforded him.

Since his retirement from house agency, a profession deplorable in his estimation, especially as to its auctioneering department, he had abandoned himself to naturally aristocratic tastes.

The perfect luxury of his latter days had embedded him

like a fly in sugar; and his mind, where very little took place from morning till night, was the junction of two curiously opposite emotions, a lingering and sturdy satisfaction that he had made his own way and his own fortune, and a sense that a man of his distinction should never have been allowed to soil his mind with work.

He stood at his sideboard in a white waistcoat with large gold and onyx buttons, watching his valet screw the necks of three champagne bottles deeper into ice pails. Between the points of his stand-up collar, which though it hurt him to move—he would on no account have had altered, the pale flesh of his underchin remained immovable. His eyes roved from bottle to bottle. He was debating, and he argued like this: Jolyon drinks a glass, perhaps two, he's so careful of himself. James, he can't take his wine nowadays. Nicholas—Fanny and he would swill water he shouldn't wonder! Soames didn't count; these young nephews—Soames was thirty-eight—couldn't drink! But Bosinney? Encountering in the name of this stranger something outside the range of his philosophy, Swithin paused. A misgiving arose within him! It was impossible to tell! June was only a girl, in love too! Emily (Mrs. James) liked a good glass of champagne. It was too dry for Juley, poor old soul, she had no palate. As to Hatty Chessman! The thought of this old friend caused a cloud of thought to obscure the perfect glassiness of his eyes: he shouldn't wonder if she drank half a bottle!

But in thinking of his remaining guest, an expression like that of a cat who is just going to purr stole over his old face: Mrs. Soames! She mightn't take much, but she would appreciate what she drank; it was a pleasure to give her good wine! A pretty woman—and sympathetic to him! . . .

Passing into the anteroom, he sat down on the edge of a chair, with his knees apart; and his tall, bulky form was

wrapped at once in an expectant, strange, primeval immobility. He was ready to rise at a moment's notice. He had not given a dinner party for months. This dinner in honour of June's engagement had seemed a bore at first (among Forsytes the custom of solemnising engagements by feasts was religiously observed), but the labours of sending invitations and ordering the repast over, he felt pleasantly stimulated.

And thus sitting, a watch in his hand, fat, and smooth, and golden, like a flattened globe of butter, he thought of nothing.

A long man, with side whiskers, who had once been in Swithin's service, but was now a greengrocer, entered and proclaimed:

"Mrs. Chessman, Mrs. Septimus Small!"

Two ladies advanced. The one in front, habited entirely in red, had large, settled patches of the same colour in her cheeks, and a hard, dashing eye. She walked at Swithin, holding out a hand cased in a long, primrose-coloured glove:

"Well, Swithin," she said, "I haven't seen you for ages. How are you? Why, my dear boy, how stout you're getting!"

The fixity of Swithin's eye alone betrayed emotion. A dumb and grumbling anger swelled in his bosom. It was vulgar to be stout, to talk of being stout; he had a chest, nothing more. Turning to his sister, he grasped her hand, and said in a tone of command:

"Well, Juley."

Mrs. Septimus Small was the tallest of the four sisters; her good, round old face had gone a little sour; an innumerable pout clung all over it, as if it had been encased in an iron wire mask up to that evening, which, being suddenly removed, left little rolls of mutinous flesh all over her countenance. Even her eyes were pouting. It was thus that she recorded her permanent resentment at the loss of Septimus Small. . . .

She was sombrely magnificent this evening in black bom-

bazine, with a mauve front cut in a shy triangle, and crowned with a black velvet ribbon round the base of her thin throat; black and mauve for evening wear was esteemed very chaste by nearly every Forsyte.

Pouting at Swithin, she said:

"Ann has been asking for you. You haven't been near us for an age!"

Swithin put his thumbs within the armholes of his waistcoat, and replied:

"Ann's getting very shaky; she ought to have a doctor!"

"Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Forsyte!"

Nicholas Forsyte, cocking his rectangular eyebrows, wore a smile. He had succeeded during the day in bringing to fruition a scheme for the employment of a tribe from Upper India in the gold-mines of Ceylon. A pet plan, carried at last in the teeth of great difficulties—he was justly pleased. It would double the output of his mines, and, as he had often forcibly argued, all experience tended to show that a man must die; and whether he died of a miserable old age in his own country, or prematurely of damp in the bottom of a foreign mine, was surely of little consequence, provided that by a change in his mode of life he benefited the British Empire. . . . He grasped Swithin's hand, exclaiming in a jocular voice:

"Well, so here we are again!"

Mrs. Nicholas, an effete woman, smiled a smile of frightened jollity behind his back.

"Mr. and Mrs. James Forsyte! Mr. and Mrs. Soames Forsyte!"

Swithin drew his heels together, his deportment ever admirable.

"Well, James, well Emily! How are you, Soames? How do you *do*?"

His hand enclosed Irene's, and his eyes swelled. She was a pretty woman—a little too pale, but her figure, her eyes, her teeth! Too good for that chap Soames!

The gods had given Irene dark-brown eyes and golden hair, that strange combination, provocative of men's glances, which is said to be the mark of a weak character. And the full, soft pallor of her neck and shoulders, above a gold-coloured frock, gave to her personality an alluring strangeness.

Soames stood behind, his eyes fastened on his wife's neck. The hands of Swithin's watch, which he still held open in his hand, had left eight behind; it was half an hour beyond his dinner time—he had had no lunch—and a strange primeval impatience surged up within him.

"It's not like Jolyon to be late!" he said to Irene with uncontrollable vexation. "I suppose it'll be June keeping him!"

"People in love are always late," she answered.

Swithin stared at her; a dusky orange dyed his cheeks.

"They've no business to be. Some fashionable nonsense!"

And behind this outburst the inarticulate violence of primitive generations seemed to mutter and grumble.

"Tell me what you think of my new star, Uncle Swithin," said Irene softly.

Among the lace in the bosom of her dress was shining a five-pointed star, made of eleven diamonds.

Swithin looked at the star. He had a pretty taste in stones; no question could have been more sympathetically devised to distract his attention.

"Who gave you that?" he asked.

"Soames."

There was no change in her face, but Swithin's pale eyes bulged as though he might suddenly have been afflicted with insight.

"I daresay you're dull at home," he said. "Any day you like to come and dine with me I'll give you as good a bottle of wine as you'll get in London."

"Miss June Forsyte—Mr. Jolyon Forsyte! . . . Mr. Boswainey! . . ."

Swithin moved his arm, and said in a rumbling voice:

"Dinner, now—dinner!"

He took in Irene, on the ground that he had not entertained her since she was a bride. June was the portion of Bosinney, who was placed between Irene and his fiancée. On the other side of June was James with Mrs. Nicholas, then old Jolyon with Mrs. James, Nicholas with Hatty Chessman, Soames with Mrs. Small, completing the circle to Swithin again.

Family dinners of the Forsytes observe certain traditions. There are, for instance no *hors d'œuvre*. The reason for this is unknown. Theory among the younger members traces it to the disgraceful price of oysters; it is more probably due to a desire to come to the point, to a good practical sense deciding at once that *hors d'œuvre* are but poor things. The Jameses alone, unable to withstand a custom almost universal in Park Lane, are now and then unfaithful.

A silent, almost morose, inattention to each other succeeds to the subsidence into their seats, lasting till well into the first entrée, but interspersed with remarks such as, "Tom's bad again; I can't tell what's the matter with him!" "I suppose Ann doesn't come down in the mornings?"—"What's the name of your doctor, Fanny? Stubbs? He's a quack!"—"Winifred? she's got too many children. Four, isn't it? She's as thin as a lath!"—"What d'you give for this sherry, Swithin? Too dry for me!"

With the second glass of champagne, a kind of hum makes itself heard, which, when divested of casual accessories and

resolved into its primal element, is found to be James telling a story, and this goes on for a long time, encroaching sometimes even upon what must universally be recognised as the crowning point of a Forsyte feast—"the saddle of mutton."

No Forsyte has given a dinner without providing a saddle of mutton. There is something in its succulent solidity which makes it suitable to people "of a certain position." It is nourishing and—tasty; the sort of thing a man remembers eating. It has a past and a future, like a deposit paid into a bank; and it is something that can be argued about.

Each branch of the family tenaciously held to a particular locality—old Jolyon swearing by Dartmoor, James by Welsh, Swithin by Southdown, Nicholas maintaining that people might sneer, but there was nothing like New Zealand. As for Roger, the "original" of the brothers, he had been obliged to invent a locality of his own, and with an ingenuity worthy of a man who had devised a new profession for his sons, he had discovered a shop where they sold German; on being remonstrated with, he had proved his point by producing a butcher's bill, which showed that he paid more than any of the others. It was on this occasion that old Jolyon, turning to June, had said in one of his bursts of philosophy:

"You may depend upon it, they're a cranky lot, the Forsytes—and you'll find it out, as you grow older!"

JOHN GALSWORTHY: *The Man of Property*
(The Forsyte Saga)

St. James

HE departed . . . and he walked down the covered way to the Albany Courtyard, and was approved by the Albany

porters as a resident handsomely conforming to the traditional high standard set by the Albany for its residents. He crossed Piccadilly, and as he did so he saw a couple of jolly fine girls, handsome, stylish, independent of carriage, swinging freely along and intimately talking with that mien of experience and broad-mindedness which some girls manage to wear in the streets. . . .

He dipped down into the extraordinary rectangle of St. James's, where he was utterly at home. A strange architecture, parsimoniously plain on the outside, indeed carrying the Oriental scorn for merely external effect to a point only reachable by a race at once hypocritical and madly proud. The shabby plainness of Wren's church well typified all the parochial parsimony. The despairing architect had been so pinched by his employers in the matter of ornament that on the whole of the northern façade there was only one of his favourite cherub's heads! What a parish!

It was a parish of flat brick walls and brass door-knobs and brass plates. And the first commandment was to polish every brass door-knob and every brass plate every morning. What happened in the way of disfigurement by polishing paste to the surrounding brick or wood had no importance. The conventions of the parish had no eye save for brass door-knobs and brass plates, which were maintained daily in effulgence by a vast early-rising population. Recruiting offices, casualty lists, the rumour of peril and of glory, could do nothing to diminish the high urgency of the polishing of those brass door-knobs and those brass plates.

The shops and offices seemed to show that the wants of customers were few and simple. Grouse moors, fisheries, yachts, valuations, hosiery, neck-ties, motor-cars, insurance, assurance, antique china, antique pictures, boots, riding-whips, and, above all, Eastern cigarettes! The master-passion

was evidently Eastern cigarettes. The few provision shops were marmoreal and majestic, catering as they did chiefly for the multifarious palatial male clubs which dominated the parish and protected and justified the innumerable "bachelor" suites that hung forth signs in every street. The parish, in effect, was first an immense monastery, where the monks, determined to do themselves extremely well in dignified peace, had made a prodigious and not entirely unsuccessful effort to keep out the excitable sex. And, second, it was an excusable conspiracy on the part of intensely respectable tradesmen and stewards to force the non-bargaining sex to pay the highest possible price for the privilege of doing the correct thing.

G. J. passed through the cardiac region of St. James's, the Square itself, where knights, baronets, barons, brewers, viscounts, marquesses, hereditary marshals and chief butlers, dukes, bishops, bankers, librarians, and Government departments gaze through the four seasons at the statue of a Dutchman; and then he found himself at his bootmaker's.

ARNOLD BENNETT: *The Pretty Lady*

Starting for Brighton

THE very character of Victoria Station and of this express was different from that of any other station and express in his experience. It was unstrenuous, soft; it had none of the busy harshness of the Midlands; it spoke of pleasure, relaxation, of spending free from all worry and humiliation of getting. Everybody who came towards this train came with an assured air of wealth and of dominion. Everybody was well dressed; many if not most of the women were in furs;

some had expensive and delicate dogs; some had pale, elegant footmen, being too august even to speak to porters. All the luggage was luxurious; hand-bags could be seen that were worth fifteen or twenty pounds apiece. There was no question of first, second, or third-class; there was no class at all on this train. Edwin had the apologetic air of the provincial who is determined to be as good as anybody else. When he sat down in the vast interior of one of these gilded vehicles he could not dismiss from his face the consciousness that he was an intruder, that he did not belong to that world. He was ashamed of his hand-baggage, and his gesture in tipping the porter lacked carelessness. Of course he pretended to a frowning, absorbed interest in a newspaper—but the very newspaper was strange; he guessed not that unless he glanced first at the penultimate column of page one thereof he convicted himself of not knowing his way about.

He could not think consecutively, not even of his adventure. His brain was in a maze of anarchy. But at frequent intervals recurred the query: "What the devil am I up to?" And he would uneasily smile to himself. When the train rolled with all its majesty out of the station and across the Thames, he said to himself, fearful, "Well, I've done it now!"

ARNOLD BENNETT: *Clayhanger*

Appointments

"OH, well, it doesn't matter," she said. "I shall have you all to-morrow."

He looked at her blankly. It was Sunday, and he had been looking forward to spending the day with Mildred. He told

himself that he must do that in common decency; he could not leave her by herself in a strange house.

"I'm awfully sorry, I'm engaged to-morrow."

He knew this was the beginning of a scene which he would have given anything to avoid. The colour on Norah's cheeks grew brighter.

"But I've asked the Gordons to lunch"—they were an actor and his wife who were touring the provinces and in London for Sunday—"I told you about it a week ago."

"I'm awfully sorry, I forgot." He hesitated. "I'm afraid I can't possibly come. Isn't there somebody else you can get?"

"What are you doing to-morrow then?"

"I wish you wouldn't cross-examine me."

"Don't you want to tell me?"

"I don't in the least mind telling you, but it's rather annoying to be forced to account for all one's movements."

Norah suddenly changed. With an effort of self-control she got the better of her temper, and going up to him took his hands.

"Don't disappoint me to-morrow, Philip, I've been looking forward so much to spending the day with you. The Gordons want to see you, and we'll have such a jolly time."

"I'd love to if I could."

"I'm not very exacting, am I? I don't ask you to do anything that's a bother. Won't you get out of your horrid engagement—just this once?"

"I'm awfully sorry, I don't see how I can," he replied sullenly.

"Tell me what it is," she said coaxingly.

He had had time to invent something.

"Griffiths' two sisters are up for the week-end and we're taking them out."

"Is that all?" she said joyfully. "Griffiths can so easily get another man."

He wished he had thought of something more urgent than that. It was a clumsy lie.

"No, I'm awfully sorry, I can't—I promised and I mean to keep my promise."

"But you promised me too. Surely I come first."

"I wish you wouldn't persist," he said.

She flared up.

"You won't come because you don't want to. I don't know what you've been doing the last few days, you've been quite different."

He looked at his watch.

"I'm afraid I'll have to be going," he said.

"You won't come to-morrow?"

"No."

"In that case you needn't trouble to come again," she cried, losing her temper for good.

"That's just as you like," he answered.

"Don't let me detain you any longer," she added ironically.

He shrugged his shoulders and walked out. He was relieved that it had gone no worse. There had been no tears. As he walked along he congratulated himself on getting out of the affair so easily. He went into Victoria Street and bought a few flowers to take in to Mildred.

The little dinner was a great success. Philip had sent in a small pot of caviare, which he knew she was very fond of, and the landlady brought them up some cutlets with vegetables and a sweet. Philip had ordered Burgundy, which was her favourite wine. With the curtains drawn, a bright fire, and one of Mildred's shades on the lamp, the room was cosy.

"It's really just like home," smiled Philip.

"I might be worse off, mightn't I?" she answered.

When they finished, Philip drew two arm-chairs in front of the fire, and they sat down. He smoked his pipe comfortably. He felt happy and generous.

"What would you like to do to-morrow?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm going to Tulse Hill. You remember the manageress at the shop, well, she's married now, and she's asked me to go and spend the day with her. Of course she thinks I'm married too."

Philip's heart sank.

"But I refused an invitation so that I might spend Sunday with you."

He thought that if she loved him she would say that in that case she would stay with him. He knew very well that Norah would not have hesitated.

"Well, you were a silly to do that. I've promised to go for three weeks and more."

"But how can you go alone?"

"Oh, I shall say that Emil's away on business. Her husband's in the glove trade, and he's a very superior fellow."

Philip was silent, and bitter feelings passed through his heart. She gave him a sidelong glance.

"You don't grudge me a little pleasure, Philip? You see, it's the last time I shall be able to go anywhere for I don't know how long, and I had promised."

He took her hand and smiled.

"No, darling, I want you to have the best time you can. I only want you to be happy."

There was a little book bound in blue paper lying open, face downwards, on the sofa, and Philip idly took it up. It was a twopenny novelette, and the author was Courtenay Paget. That was the name under which Norah wrote.

"I do like his books," said Mildred. "I read them all. They're so refined."

He remembered what Norah had said of herself.

"I have an immense popularity among kitchen-maids. They think me so genteel."

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM: *Of Human Bondage*

A Supper-Party

GREAT problems arose in Hagworth Street out of Jenny's embarkation upon the ship of life. So long as she had been merely a pupil of Madame Aldavini's, family opposition to her choice of a profession had slumbered; but with the prospect of her speedy début it broke out again very fiercely. . . .

Charlie, having found that he was easily able to keep all knowledge of his daughter's lapse into publicity from his fellow workmen at the shop in Kentish Town, decided to celebrate her imminent departure to the boreal pole (Glasgow soon achieved a glacial topography in Hagworth Street) by giving a grand supper-party.

"We'll have old Vergoe and Madame Neverseenher"—his witty periphrasis for Aldavini—"and a brother of mine you've none of you never seen either, a rare comic, or he used to be, though where he is now, well, that wants knowing."

"What's the good of saying he's to come to supper, then?" inquired Mrs. Raeburn.

"Only if he's about," explained Charlie. "If he's about, I'd like Jenny here to meet him, because he was always a big hand at club concerts twenty years ago, before he went to Africa. Arthur his name *was*."

"Oh, for goodness' sake stop your talking," said Mrs. Raeburn.

"And you can't ask Madame," announced Jenny, who was horrified by the contemplation of a meeting between her father and the dancing-mistress.

"*And why not? And why not?* will anybody here kindly tell me why not?"

"Because you can't," said Jenny decidedly.

"Of course not. The child's quite right," Mrs. Raeburn corroborated.

"Well, of course, you all know better than the old man. But I daresay she'd like a talk about Paris with your poor old dad."

However, notwithstanding the elision of all Mr. Raeburn's proposed guests from the list of invitations, the supper did happen, and the master of the house derived some consolation from being allowed to preside at the head of his own table, if not sufficiently far removed from his wife to enjoy himself absolutely. Mr. Vergoe, getting a very old man now, came with Miss Lilli Vergoe, still a second-line girl at the Orient Palace of Varieties; and Edie arrived from Brixton, where she was learning to make dresses. Eileen Vaughan came, at Mrs. Raeburn's instigation and much to Jenny's disgust; and Mr. Smithers, the new lodger, a curly-headed young draper's assistant, tripped down from his room upstairs. May, of course, was present; and Alfie sent a picture postcard from Northampton, showing the after-effects of a party. This was put up on the mantelpiece and greatly diverted the company. Mrs. Purkiss was invited, and pasty-faced Percy, and Claude and Mr. Purkiss were also invited, but Mrs. Purkiss signalled her disapproval by taking no notice of the invitation, thereby throwing Mrs. Raeburn into a regular flutter of uncertainty. Nevertheless she turned up ten minutes late with both her offspring to everybody's great disappointment and Mrs. Raeburn's great anxiety, when she

saw with what a will her nephews settled down to the tinned tongue.

The supper passed off splendidly, and nearly everything was eaten and praised. Mrs. Purkiss talked graciously to Mr. Smithers about the prospects of haberdashery and the principles of window-dressing and, somewhat tactlessly, about the advantage of cash registers. Charlie gave a wonderfully humorous description of his first crossing of the English Channel. Percy and Claude ate enormously, and Percy was sick, to his uncle's immense entertainment and profound satisfaction, as it gave him an excuse to tell the whole story of the Channel over again, ending up with: "It's all right, Perce. Cheer up, sonny; Dover's in sight."

Eileen ate self-consciously and gazed with considerable respectfulness at Miss Lilli Vergoe, who related pleasantly her many triumphs over the snares and duplicity of the new stage manager at the Orient. Mr. Vergoe chatted amiably with everybody in turn and made a great feature of helping the stewed tripe. May went into fits of laughter at everything and everybody, and Jenny discussed with Edie what style of dress should be made from the roll of blue serge presented to her by Uncle James.

After supper everybody settled down to make the evening a complete success.

Mr. Vergoe sang "Champagne Charlie" and "In her hair she wore a white camellia," and Mr. Raeburn joined in the chorus of the former with a note of personal satisfaction, while Mrs. Raeburn always said:

"Champagne Charlie *is* his name,
Half a pint of porter *is* his game."

Neither Miss Vergoe nor Miss Vaughan would oblige with a dance, to the great disappointment of Mr. Smithers who

had hoped for a solution of many sartorial puzzles from such close proximity to two actresses. Jenny, however, was set on the table when the plates had been cleared away, and danced a breakdown to the great embarrassment of Mrs. Purkiss who feared for pasty-faced Percy and Claude's sense of the shocking.

Percy recited "Casabianca," and Claude, though he did not recite himself, prompted his brother in so many of the lines that it became to all purposes a duet. Edie giggled in a corner with Mr. Smithers, and told the latter once or twice that he was a sauce-box and no mistake. Mr. Smithers himself sang "Queen of my heart" in a mildly pleasant tenor voice, and being encored, sang "Maid of Athens," telling Miss Vergoe, in confidence, that several persons had passed the remark that he was very like Lord Byron. To which Miss Vergoe, with great want of appreciation, replied, "What of it?" and sent Mr. Smithers back to the readier admiration of Edie.

It was a very delightful evening indeed, whose most delightful moment, perhaps, was Mrs. Purkiss's retirement with Percy and Claude, leaving the rest of the party to settle themselves round the kitchen fire, roast chestnuts, eat oranges and apples, smoke, and drink the various drinks that became their ages and tastes.

COMPTON MACKENZIE: *Carnival*

Over the Telephone

SIMULTANEOUSLY another telephone conversation was being carried on in the London area. Sybil Barnabas, although separated from her husband, was still abreast of his public

activities, and she was discussing this very subject with a friend. The friend, who had been present at the first performance, had telephoned to offer an outline of the play and an account of its reception: and they had told each other what the papers had said this morning. They had been a little merry at the omens of failure. Then, as if by afterthought, the friend had added a piece of spicy information.

"Have you *seen* Sam? Or heard from him? Or of him?"

"No. Why?"

"I thought you might, that's all."

"How mysterious, darling!" cried Sybil, with a quickly beating heart. "I shall think you're concealing something."

"Well." The voice grew very secret, and rather hollow, as if the speaker had put her hand to the mouthpiece in case a servant overheard. "Clothilde saw him. Yes. Lunching with a young woman. My dear, holding hands across the table. . . . Yes, really. Quite openly. Touching picture of young love. Clothilde was just on her way out when she saw Sam. She intended to stop and speak to him. On the principle of holding candles to devils, she said; but I should say her motive was impure curiosity. But when she noticed that they were lost in love she thought she'd be *de trop*, and beat a tactful retreat."

"And hurried to tell *you*," commented Sybil. "How characteristically kind!" Her sarcasm was perfectly light. She heard appreciative laughter from her friend. "Did Clothilde know who this young woman was? Probably Ann. They're very sticky together."

"No, it wasn't Ann. She knows Ann. She doesn't know the others: I asked her. She swore it was young love."

"He's incurably sentimental about young girls. Legions of them. They think he's so wonderful. Tender and true. A

father who isn't. Sort of licensed incest. But it won't get any farther than hand-holding."

There was more laughter.

"Wonderful phrase! I shall remember it. So you think it's only an affair of the hand. That's what *I* thought. Clothilde *didn't*. Still, I felt you ought to know, darling."

"Oh, yes, thanks, darling. Any item about my late husband——"

"Why 'late'?"

"Well, not quite 'ex-' do you think?"

"You're priceless! The same old Sybil! Oh, well, one's delighted you're bearing up so well."

"Bearing *up*! I'm a free woman at last!"

"But not in conduct, I hope, darling. We should all be disturbed if we thought you were *too* free. Oh, that reminds me; have you heard any nasty rumours about the fat man?"

"What fat man? I don't know who— Oh, I see. For a moment I thought you meant Sam. Yes, the fat man. Are there some new ones? What are they?"

"Oh, very nasty. Horrid. I can't trust them to the telephone. What? Libellous."

"Worse than about Sam? Really? I wonder what you mean."

"I hope to goodness *he's* not involved, darling."

What ghoulisn excitement thrilled the distortedly kind voice!

"Sam? Well, that would be doubly libellous, surely. Look here, do lunch one day, will you? How about to-day? Well, to-morrow, then? Will you come here? I've got rather a good cook. Plain, you know. Yes, looks *and* cooks. I hope she's not listening! Still, one's lucky. . . . Oh, one-fifteenish. Till to-morrow, then."

Sybil hoped that her voice throughout had betrayed no

emotion. Cool curiosity. But she was now thankful to have escaped her malignant oracle! Beast! So inquisitive that she must ring up to plant her dagger without warning. An eager, unamusing gossip, watchful to murder anybody's peace. It would be all round by night. Jumbled, magnified. Fool Sam was! It was so true to form! However, she'd betrayed nothing. She was pretty sure of that. No breathlessness; nor evidence of heightened heartbeat which to herself had been much too evident. Thank God!

FRANK SWINNERTON: *The Two Wives*

A Christmas Tree

AT five minutes past eight there was a knock on her door, and then another knock. Agatha Payne and May Beringer entered. They stood bewildered on the threshold.

It was indeed a pretty sight. The curtains were drawn and the far end of the room was duskily shadowed, but at the fireplace end stood—THE TREE!

And what a tree! Of just the right size for the room, it had a shape and symmetry that surely no other tree in all Christmasdom could equal. It tapered gradually with exquisite shape and form to a point that quivered and flickered like a green flame. On the flame sturdily triumphed Father Christmas, diminutive in body, but alive in his smile, his stolidity, his gallant colour. It was the colour that entranced the eye. Mrs. Amorest had worked with the soul of an artist. She had not overburdened the slender branches. The thin chains of frosted silver that hung from bough to bough seemed of themselves to dance in patterned rhythm. Balls of fire, emerald and ruby, amethyst and crystal, shone in the

light of the candles. And at every place colour blended with colour. The tree was always the tree. The light that flashed from its boughs was not foreign to it, but seemed to be, integrally, part of its life and history. It had been placed on a long and broad looking-glass, into which it looked down as though into a lake of crystal water. The candles seemed to be the voices of the tree; it was vocal in its pleasure, its sense of fun at its own splendour, its grand surprise that after all it had come off so well.

In proportion, in blending of colour, in grandeur of spirit, it was the finest tree in England that night. On either side of the tree were two tables spread with white cloths. On one table were some parcels beautifully tied with coloured ribbons, and on the other sandwiches, a plum-cake with white icing, some saffron buns, and a dish of sweets and chocolates.

The two ladies stood amazed. So pretty was the room with its soft pink colours, its light dim save for the aureole of golden splendour shed by the tree, so utterly unexpected the display, that words would not come; only at last May Beringer cried, "Oh dear! Dear me! Dear me!"

Both ladies had dressed in their party best; May in her orange silk, that suited her, I fear, not too well, and Agatha in dark purple, a dress of a fashion now forgotten, too small for her, but that nevertheless with her black hair finely brushed, her dark eyes flashing, gave her the air of older days, the air that had made Mr. Payne, thirty-five years ago, call her his "Gipsy Queen."

"Oh, I do hope you won't both think me too silly," said Mrs. Amorest, coming forward, "but I simply had to do something this Christmas. We've just done nothing the last two Christmases and it did seem too bad. Don't you think so? I do hope you don't mind?"

"Mind?" said May Beringer, coming towards the tree and

gazing at it with her mouth open like a school-girl. "Why, Mrs. Amorest, it's lovely! It's the loveliest thing! why, I can't speak. I can't indeed. Words won't come. I can't say anything at all."

Agatha Payne was moved more deeply still. The colour possessed her as colour always possessed her, coming towards her like a living breathing person, holding out its arms to her, whispering to her, "You and I! We are the only ones here who understand. I have been waiting for you and you alone."

Indeed it seemed to her that the tree belonged to her and was hers absolutely. The two other women vanished from her consciousness; she could see only the pale golden flame of the candles, so steady, so pure, so dignified, the balls of amethyst and ruby and crystal as they swung and turned and gleamed so slightly and yet always with a secret life and purpose of their own.

And the deep green of the tree, richly velvet under the light of the candles! She stood absorbed, entranced, waves of sensuous pleasure running through her body.

So silent were they both that after a minute had passed Mrs. Amorest was alarmed.

"I'm so glad you like it," she said almost timidly. "Shan't we sit down and look at it? I like to think of all the other trees there are to-night in everybody's homes and the children dancing round them and the presents——"

She broke off because a longing for Brand came to her so urgently that it was all she could do not to call out his name. For a moment it seemed to her foolish humbug, sham and ridiculous sentiment, that the three of them, old, forgotten, not wanted by anybody, should indulge in this display. But looking up at the tree she was comforted. Anything so beautiful had its own purpose. She had made a

beautiful thing. She felt the joy of the creator in her handiwork. . . .

The next part of the entertainment arrived. Mrs. Amorest picked up the parcels in their lovely white paper and coloured ribbon and, blushing a little (shell pink faintly colouring the ivory of her cheeks), said:

"These are little tiny things that I got. You mustn't laugh at me, please, for getting them. I think the chief part of a present is that it should be wrapped up in paper, don't you? But I hope you'll like them."

And they did like them. At least May Beringer liked hers. She had a case with three pairs of scissors and a book in a purple cover, *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold. Agatha Payne said little about hers—only "Thank you, Lucy," in a deep hoarse-throated murmur. She had a box of coloured cottons and a purple blotter. She could not take her eyes away from the tree.

Then they cut the cake and ate the sandwiches, and Mrs. Amorest made tea and listened happily, cosily to May Beringer's reminiscences.

How happy it was with the blazing tree, the dim room, the bells pealing beyond the window, the crackling fire!

HUGH WALPOLE: *The Old Ladies*

An Accident

ABOUT a year after William went to London, and just after Paul had left school, before he got work, Mrs. Morel was upstairs and her son was painting in the kitchen—he was very clever with his brush—when there came a knock at the door. Crossly he put down his brush to go. At the same

moment his mother opened a window upstairs and looked down.

A pit-lad in his dirt stood on the threshold.

"Is this Walter Morel's?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mrs. Morel. "What is it?"

But she had guessed already.

"Your mester's got hurt," he said.

"Eh, dear me!" she exclaimed. "It's a wonder if he hadn't, lad. And what's he done this time?"

"I don't know for sure, but it's 'is leg somewhere. They ta'cin' 'im ter th' 'ospital."

"Good gracious me!" she exclaimed. "Eh, dear, what a one he is! There's not five minutes of peace, I'll be hanged if there is! His thumb's nearly better, and now— Did you see him?"

"I seed him at th' bottom. An' I seed 'em bring 'im up in a tub, an' 'e wor in a dead faint. But he shouted like anythink when Doctor Fraser examined him i' th' lamp cabin— an' cossed an' swore, an' said as 'e wor goin' to be ta'en whoam—'e worn't goin' ter th' 'ospital."

"He *would* want to come home, so that I can have all the bother. Thank you, my lad. Eh, dear, if I'm not sick—sick and surfeited, I am!"

She came downstairs. Paul had mechanically resumed his painting.

"And it must be pretty bad if they've taken him to the hospital," she went on. "But what a *careless* creature he is! Other men don't have all these accidents. Yes, he *would* want to put all the burden on me. Eh, dear, just as we *were* getting easy a bit at last. Put those things away, there's no time to be painting now. What time is there a train? I know I s'll have to go trailing to Keston. I s'll have to leave that bedroom."

"I can finish it," said Paul.

"You needn't. I shall catch the seven o'clock back, I should think. Oh, my blessed heart, the fuss and commotion he'll make! And those granite setts at Tinder Hill—he might well call them kidney pebbles—they'll jolt him almost to bits. I wonder why they can't mend them, the state they're in, an' all the men as go across in that ambulance. You'd think they'd have a hospital here. The men bought the ground, and, my sirs, there'd be accidents enough to keep it going. But no, they must trail them ten miles in a slow ambulance to Nottingham. It's a crying shame! Oh, and the fuss he'll make! I know he will! I wonder who's with him. Barker, I s'd think. Poor beggar, he'll wish himself anywhere rather. But he'll look after him, I know. Now there's no telling how long he'll be stuck in that hospital—and *won't* he hate it! But if it's only his leg it's not so bad."

All the time she was getting ready. Hurriedly taking off her bodice, she crouched at the boiler while the water ran slowly into her lading-can.

"I wish this boiler was at the bottom of the sea!" she exclaimed, wriggling the handle impatiently. She had very handsome, strong arms, rather surprising on a smallish woman.

Paul cleared away, put on the kettle, and set the table.

"There isn't a train till four-twenty," he said. "You've time enough."

"Oh no I haven't!" she cried, blinking at him over the towel as she wiped her face.

"Yes you have. You must drink a cup of tea at any rate. Should I come with you to Keston?"

"Come with me? What for, I should like to know? Now, what have I to take him? Eh, dear! His clean shirt—and it's a blessing it *is* clean. But it had better be aired. And stockings—he won't want them—and a towel, I suppose; and handkerchiefs. Now what else?"

"A comb, a knife and fork and spoon," said Paul. His father had been in hospital before.

"Goodness knows what sort of state his feet were in," continued Mrs. Morel, as she combed her long brown hair, that was fine as silk, and was touched now with grey. "He's very particular to wash himself to the waist, but below he thinks doesn't matter. But there, I suppose they see plenty like it."

Paul had laid the table. He cut his mother one or two pieces of very thin bread-and-butter.

"Here you are," he said, putting her cup of tea in her place.

"I can't be bothered!" she exclaimed crossly.

"Well, you've got to, so there, now it's put out ready," he insisted.

So she sat down and sipped her tea, and ate a little, in silence. She was thinking.

D. H. LAWRENCE: *Sons and Lovers*

Daughter and Parents

MONICA had very often been told that Mrs. Ingram had married at eighteen, and the information always vaguely annoyed her.

"I suppose you must have been very pretty when you were young," she said politely, trying not to know too consciously that she was saying something very nasty indeed.

Imogen Ingram laughed curtly.

She was not yet forty, and although her complexion had faded, her hair, eyes, and teeth were still beautiful. It was, of course, natural and suitable that she should display ample curves both above and below her tightly corseted waist. Men always preferred a full figure to a skinny one.

"You're a little goose, Monica," she said kindly. "I had the freshness of youth, of course, as a girl, but I don't suppose otherwise I've altered so very much. And prettiness isn't really very important, darling. A great many very pretty girls never get a chance of marrying at all, and some quite plain ones turn out attractive to men. One never can tell. Father always said that he first fell in love with me because he thought I was natural, and unaffected, and didn't think about myself all the time. No really nice man ever cares about a girl who's affected, or self-conscious."

Monica hoped ardently that she was neither of these things.

Claude Ashe, at all events, did not think so. She was sure that he liked her very much. Perhaps, even, he was falling in love with her. If he was, would he say so—and when?

The season was nearly over, and Monica and her parents were to pay two country-house visits, spend a month in Scotland, and after that, said Mrs. Ingram, Monica could go to the Marlowes—Lady Marlowe was taking a furnished house near Oxford for the whole of September—whilst her parents went to join a large house-party where Royalty was to be met.

"I wish you'd been asked too, my pet," said Mrs. Ingram, "but naturally people don't want young girls about. It limits conversation, and everything. When you're married, it'll be quite different."

Girlhood was indeed, Monica felt, an inferior state from which escape was desirable at any cost.

What a pity that one couldn't accept Claude Ashe, even if he did propose! Probably, however, he never would, for no really nice and honourable man proposed to a girl unless he was in a position to offer her a home at least as comfortable as the one from which he was taking her.

A week before she was to leave London, Monica was

invited by Lady Margaret Miller to dine, and go with a large party of young people—chaperoned by Lady Margaret's married daughter—to the White City.

"Yes, of course you may go," said Mrs. Ingram. "I certainly shouldn't allow you to go to dinner parties without me in the ordinary way, but an old friend like Lady Margaret is different. It's very kind of her indeed. Write a nice little note and accept, Monica. You'd better let me see it."

Monica did not like her mother's spasmodic supervision of her correspondence, but there was no escaping from it. As though, she thought, she did not know all the rules about letter-writing, that had been impressed upon her ever since she could write at all!

"Never begin a letter with 'I'——"

"Put 'My dear So-and-so' to a person older or more important than yourself."

"Always read through a letter before closing it, and if anything has been left out, rewrite the letter—don't add it in."

"Never put a P.S. It's vulgar."

Avoiding these and other pitfalls, Monica wrote her acceptance to Lady Margaret.

Next evening, a telephone message came from her kind hostess. A young man had failed, for the White City party—was there anybody whom Monica would specially like asked, whom Lady Margaret could invite in place of the defaulter?

The Ingrams were finishing dinner when Mrs. Ingram was called to the telephone, and Monica could hear, from the little room next door, her own name and her mother's proper expressions of gratitude and assurances that it really was *much* too kind.

Presently Mrs. Ingram returned and explained.

"Oh, really, that's *too* good of her," said Vernon Ingram. "I never heard of anything so kind. Monica, do you understand that Lady Margaret is good enough to be suggesting that you should submit to her the name of some young man whom you'd like to invite to her house?"

Monica felt embarrassed by her father's excessive sense of the privilege conferred upon her.

"Well, really," said Mrs. Ingram, "I don't quite know what to do. I told Lady Margaret I'd telephone to her the first thing to-morrow morning. Of course Monica must write a note as well. Now, we must think——"

Monica had thought already, but she knew better than to say so.

The butler placed the dessert dishes on the table, and approached Mrs. Ingram with the port decanter.

Neither Mrs. Ingram nor Monica ever drank any, and they watched Palter's measured progress with impatience.

The moment the door had shut behind him, Monica's mother spoke.

"It must be someone we know fairly well, otherwise it becomes rather too marked. What about Claude Ashe, darling?"

Monica nearly jumped.

She looked at her mother, but there was no sign of any special significance to be seen.

"I think he'd do very well," she replied carefully.

"Well, then, you'd better ring him up to-morrow—or, wait a minute; I think it would come better from me, perhaps. *I'll* ring him up."

"A very good idea," said Vernon Ingram approvingly. "A nice young fellow, and not at all likely to think any young lady is running after him."

He laughed a little as he spoke.

"Why, father?"

"Why, my dear child? Because I hope he's a modest young man, and because, as he's not in a position to marry at all, at present, he can't suppose that he is being pursued with that end in view."

Vernon Ingram pushed back his chair from the table.

"It's quite pleasant to have a quiet evening at home together, once in a while," he remarked, as he opened the door for his wife and daughter.

They left him, as usual, for his customary quarter of an hour in the dining-room, whilst they sat in the drawing-room.

Mrs. Ingram picked up the newspaper, and Monica went to the piano. She would not have been encouraged to read the newspaper, even had she wished to do so, and it would have been bad manners to read a book unless her mother had also been doing the same.

So she opened "The Star Folio" and played Beethoven's *Adieux* and a waltz, *Sobre les Olas*.

"That will do now, darling," said Mrs. Ingram. "I can hear father coming, and he may want to talk. Ring for coffee."

Monica obeyed.

She was not really particularly interested in either the *Adieux* or *Sobre les Olas*, although she vaguely liked the idea of herself, in a simple white frock, dreamily playing under the lamplight, and it always rather annoyed her that her conception of her own appearance had to be spoilt by the fact that, having no faculty for playing by ear, she was obliged always to keep her eyes fixed upon her music.

All the time she had been playing she had been thinking about Claude Ashe. It made a person much more interesting and exciting, somehow, if you thought about him to the sound of music.

Neither of her parents mentioned Ashe again. The evening, to Monica's dismay, was spent in trying to learn Bridge. Her father was teaching her mother as well as herself. Mrs. Ingram got on fairly well—she had played whist for many years—but Monica, as usual, forgot what were trumps, mixed clubs with spades, and persistently failed to return her partner's lead.

At ten o'clock she went up to bed in tears.

E. M. DELAFIELD: *Thank Heaven Fasting*

Children Playing

THE children were playing gravely and separately, taking very little notice of one another, each one intent on his or her own game in the sand. Their mothers would have felt it rude if they had all been occupied within arm's reach of one another and had not kept up a constant exchange of talk, but the children ignored one another, except for a few necessary remarks: "You're stepping on my bridge." "Can I have your spade?" Aloof and alone they played, and Carol, watching them, suddenly realised how mysterious they were. What did she know about Bobby after all? She knew his solid little body, and sometimes for a second she was in touch with his hidden mind, but only for a second. Filled to the brim with wishes, fears, thoughts, imaginings beyond her reach, he spoke to her, and smiled or cried, he tried to make her understand what he wanted or what dismayed him, and then retreated again into himself. He was an explorer in a strange world, a primitive person making dubious experiments in a civilised country which did not speak his language. She loved him more than her life, but very often she could

not speak to him without an interpreter, and there was no interpreter. Wanting to get close to him, she knelt down by him in the sand and pulled him towards her, putting her arm round him. He looked at her like a cat interrupted when washing, pushed her arm away, and resumed his operations on a sand castle.

Evelyn was watching Tatty and another little girl near, thinking that the child's yellow frock would have suited Tatty better. . . .

"It's lovely for them having this sand to play in," she said politely to Carol. "Tatty always looks forward to it."

"It's so good for Bobby having visitors to share it," Carol replied with equal politeness.

Tatty was shovelling sand into a wheelbarrow with a small spade. Bobby had been making a castle and trying to add turrets by shaping them with a bucket, but the sand was too dry to stick together and the turrets were only heaps shaped like beehives. Bobby grew bored with them, and looked across at Tatty. That was his wheelbarrow! It was his birthday present, given to him that morning, green, lined with scarlet. He seized the handles and turned it over, upsetting the load of sand.

"I want the wheelbarrow," he said. He added kindly, "You can have the bucket."

Tatty accepted the bucket. She was a good-tempered little girl, and perhaps she was getting tired of filling the wheelbarrow. She would build a sandhill, and put the bucket on top. She began to dig busily, the tip of her tongue sticking out of the corner of her mouth.

Bobby shovelled a little sand into the wheelbarrow, but perceived at once that to fill it was going to be a long and arduous business, and stopped. He pushed the wheelbarrow backwards and forwards for a bit but found that tedious. He

did not really know what to do with it unless he had something to wheel in it. He was a little *blasé* this afternoon, slightly flushed and swollen with birthday pride.

He looked at Tatty, who was just planting a bucket on top of her hill. He sprawled across, knocking down part of the hill, grabbed the bucket, and put it in the wheelbarrow. There are limits to the patience of even a good little girl of three. Tatty yelled, and hit him with her spade.

The two mothers swooped down upon them.

"Bobby! You naughty little boy! Let Tatty have that bucket at once! Look, you've spoilt her castle! You must help her build it up again."

"Don't be so silly, Tatty! You've had the bucket for a long time, and it's Bobby's turn! Remember it's his birthday. It was very naughty of you to hit him! Tell him you're sorry."

The two small creatures stared at one another, Tatty grasping her spade, Bobby grasping the bucket.

"Bobby!" Carol protested gently. "Give Tatty that bucket!"

Evelyn's cool tones were firm.

"No, Tatty's had the bucket for quite a long time. You must let Bobby have it now, Tatty."

"But Bobby's got the wheelbarrow!" Tatty cried indignantly.

"Well, you've got a spade. Dig a nice castle."

That was off the point, as Tatty knew. Every one of them had a spade. Besides, she had dug a nice castle and Bobby had fallen on it. And she had let him have the wheelbarrow. A sense of injustice overwhelmed her. Her small face grew red and puckered for tears.

Evelyn was not thinking about justice; she was pursuing with determination her own idea of social behaviour.

Whatever you might really think, you blamed your own child, and made her give in.

"He must give her the bucket," Carol said. "It was all his fault."

Evelyn's will was stronger.

"No, she doesn't want the bucket. Tatty! If you're silly, I shall take you home—now—before tea."

Tatty knew that her mother meant what she said. She knew that there was a birthday cake with four candles; Bobby had taken her to peep through the window. She swallowed her tears and began to dig a hole in the sand. Evelyn was satisfied, but Carol shook her head at Bobby. . . . Half apologetically, she touched Tatty's dark head.

"We'll go in to tea soon."

LETTICE COOPER: *The New House*

Shopping

. . . MRS. HECCOMB always shopped from ten-thirty to midday, with a break for coffee at the Corona Café. If she was not "in town" by ten-thirty, she fretted. With her hive-shaped basket under her elbow, Portia in her wake, she punted happily, slowly up and down the High Street crossing at random, quite often going back on her tracks. Women who shop by telephone do not know what the pleasures of buying are. Rich women live at such a distance from life that very often they never see their money—the Queen, they say, for instance, never carries a purse. But Mrs. Heccomb's unstitched morocco purse, with the tarnished silver corners, was always in evidence. She paid cash almost everywhere, partly because she had found that something happens to bills,

making them always larger than you think, partly because her roving disposition made her hate to be tied to one set of shops. She liked to be *known* in as many shops as possible, to receive a personal smile when she came in. And she had by this time managed things so well that she was known in every Sealshop of standing. Where she had not actually bought things, she had repeatedly priced them. She did admit herself tied to one butcher, one dairy because they *sent*: Mrs. Heccomb did not care for carrying meat, and the milk supply for a household must be automatic. Even to these two shops she was not wholly faithful: she had been known to pick up a kidney here and there, some new shade of butter, a crock of cream.

To Portia . . . Mrs. Heccomb's expenditure seemed princely—though there was often change out of a florin. When Mrs. Heccomb had too many pennies, she would build them up, at the next counter she came to, into pillars of twelve or six, and push them across cautiously. Where she paid in coppers only, she felt she had got a bargain: money goes further when you do not break into silver, and any provident person baulks at changing a note. Everything was bought in small quantities exactly as it was wanted from day to day. To-day, for instance, she made the following purchases:

One cake of Vinolia for the bathroom,
Half a dozen Relief nibs,
One pot of salmon and shrimp paste (small size),
One pan scrubber of crumpled metal gauze,
One bottle of Bisurated Magnesia tablets (small size),
One bottle of gravy browning,
One skein of "natural" darning wool (for Dickie's vests),
One electric-light bulb,

One lettuce,
One length of striped canvas to re-seat a deck-chair,
One set of whalebones to repair corsets,
Two pair of lamb's kidneys,
Half a dozen small screws,
A copy of *The Church Times*.

ELIZABETH BOWEN: *The Death of the Heart*

Preparing for the Dance

SHE gathered up her discarded clothes and went back to her room. There on the bed lay the red frock, smooth, inviting, brilliant; pressed out by Nannie, not yet tried on.

Now for the hair. She had practised nightly for the past week: this was its public début. Part it in the middle, bring the two lots forward, plait them, coil one round each ear, like a German girl. Kate's idea. To-night the divided strands obeyed her, weaving themselves swiftly, smoothly. Round went the coils, exactly symmetrical, the ends tucked themselves neatly in. Now clamp them to the head with dozens and dozens of pins, fortify them with prongs. It was done. It was firm as a rock. Not even lancers could prevail against it. She dropped her hands and stared into the mirror.

Yes, it suits me. Head a good shape from the side; and it looked nice in the place just below the ear, where jawbone swept up in a soft clear curve and met the neck. One single hair was pulling somewhere out of reach. It must just be borne. Mademoiselle, jabbing at tangles with the comb, used to say, *Il faut souffrir pour être belle*.

Now for the dress.

After all, I shall probably enjoy the dance frightfully.

Quarter of an hour passed.

Kate put her head round the door.

"Ready?"

Olivia was standing still, with leaden stillness, before the glass. One glance, and Kate had spotted disaster.

"Here. You've got it twisted." She gave a few sharp twitches to the waist and skirt. After a pause she said with restraint.

"It looks all right. Very nice."

But it was not so. In the silence the truth weighed, became a stone that could not be rolled away.

Uneven hem; armholes too tight; and the draping—when Olivia looked at the clumsy lumpish pointless draping a terrible boiling-up, a painful constriction from chest to forehead started to scorch and suffocate her.

"It simply doesn't fit anywhere. . . ." The words burst from her chokingly. "It's the most ghastly— It's no good. I won't go looking like a freak. I must simply *rip* it off and burn it and not go to the dance, that's all." She clutched wildly at the bodice, as if to wrench it from her.

Kate cried suddenly.

"You've got it on back to front!"

Olivia's hands dropped.

"Have I?" she said meekly.

"You would." With the asperity of relief Kate seized and reversed her hurriedly, plunged her once more through the armholes. "Now let's see you. Hm. It drops at the back now, of course."

Olivia turned away from the glass while Kate hooked, tweaked, patted her into shape. It was a comfort to look into space for a little while before having to face once more the now irrevocable and perhaps scarcely improved image.

"The arms seem to catch a bit." She crooked her elbows,

strained at the seams and heard them crack with satisfaction.

"You're *not* to do that, Livia. You'll just have to bear it. Why on earth couldn't you *force* her to cut them properly? It's always the same with your clothes. You never could control her."

"I know. I seem to make her feel so cheerful."

Olivia sighed, thinking how at each fitting Miss Robinson had become increasingly volatile—her scissors more profuse and inconsequent, her piano-playing more frequent.

"She's loopy," said Kate vigorously; adding, as she gave the skirt a final tweak: "And I really believe you are too. Not to know your back from your front. How'll you ever get on in the world? Mm? . . . There."

Now I must look.

She looked.

It was not so bad. It dipped at the back; and there was a queer place in the waist where, owing to a mistake in the cutting, Miss Robinson had had, in her own words, to contrive it. But still, but still . . . if one didn't look too closely, it was all right. Certainly the colour was becoming.

Delivered from despair, once more a young girl dressed for her first dance—not a caricature of one—able again to compete with and appreciate others, she saw Kate suddenly with seeing eyes and cried enthusiastically:

"Oh! You look simply topping!"

The airy apple-green frock which Kate had made for herself flared out below her hips and clung lightly to waist and breast. A little floating cape was attached just over each flat delicately moulded shoulder-blade by a band of minute flowers, buds, leaves of all colours. She wore green stockings and silver shoes. Against the green, her skin looked white as coral, and her hair had a green-blond gleam.

““You look like the girl on the cover of a Special Spring Number.”

Twisting to look at her cape, Kate said placidly:

“I just took it straight from *Vogue*.”

Side by side they stood and looked at their reflections. After a bit Kate said:

“Thank heaven, anyway, we don’t look alike.”

Olivia ventured:

“We set each other off really rather well, don’t you think?” She thought: The younger girl, with her gipsy colouring, afforded a rich foil to her sister’s fair beauty.

“Your hair’s gone up all right,” murmured Kate dreamily.

“It makes me rather deaf, though.”

Kate roused herself, said briskly, “I must go and hook up Mother,” and disappeared.

Olivia took from a drawer a silver tinsel spray—a water-lily with some leaves—and stuck it in her belt, just where Miss Robinson’s graceful bow overlooped itself. From the back of the same drawer she extracted a box of powder and, breaking into its crumbling virgin surface with a swansdown puff, dabbed at her chin. The powder was pink. It took off the shine nicely, but seemed scarcely to blend with her skin. She wiped some of it off again. Would Mother notice; and, if so, attack in public?

Now for the crowning touch: a little scent on the hair, for one’s partners to sniff up rapturously. The idea came from the *Daily Mirror* serial, whose heroine had hair smelling naturally of violets. This was one better: lily of the valley. She opened the tiny flask—a birthday present from Nannie—and shook it into her parting. Immediately she was drenched in a thick sweetish yet acrid odour. It didn’t seem to smell quite like lilies of the valley, particularly blent, as it now was, with the smell of hair. Well, well . . . Two

hours yet in which to become faint yet delicious. Still, perhaps . . .

She opened the window and hung her head out into the breeze for some minutes.

ROSAMOND LEHMANN: *Invitation to the Waltz*

Suburban Amenities

THE bathroom in the Sneyd home was the most opulently furnished room in the whole house.

After the modest, distempered bedrooms with the cheap, deal cupboards, it was like coming upon a corner of Babylon to go into the bathroom. The brilliant chromium of the taps, the shaded mauve of the tiles and the glittering bevel-edge of the mirror combined to give an air of rather splendid luxury; it was as though within those four walls hygiene had suddenly become wasteful, even wanton. And there was the built-in bath. It was the latter that counted. To a man, one bath—even one bathroom—is very like another. But for a woman a built-in bath has a message all its own. You soap yourself and get clean in the ordinary kind. But in a built-in bath you lie full-length and feel like Cleopatra.

The builder who had installed it knew all about the psychology of bathrooms. He knew that a built-in bath and a few stainless fittings only cost a pound or two more than the old-fashioned sort and add a full fifty pounds' worth to the value of the house. And in this Alice agreed with him; she regarded the extra money as well expended. She bathed every day before tea, and those steamy twenty minutes were the most blissful of the day. She did most of her thinking in the bath. Lying there with the water reaching up to her

shoulder-blades she always felt singularly constructive and clear-headed.

At that moment she was occupied with thoughts of a radiogram. She had tried for weeks to suppress the idea, but now it filled her whole mind. Without a radiogram the house seemed suddenly unfurnished.

She knew perfectly well that they couldn't afford the thing. They hadn't eighteen guineas to spend. But the manufacturers appeared to understand the position exactly; they were evidently used to dealing with young people like the Sneyds. For instance, there was an advertisement for the Majestophone in that week's *Radio Times*. A young man very like Gerald was sitting with his arm round the neck of a girl very much like Alice and they were both gazing at a massive cabinet across which was written the words: "It tunes as it plays." But it was the superscription that had first caught her eye: "Yours for the asking—Beethoven—Brussels—Caruso—Harry Roy—Kreisler—Radio Luxembourg—the whole world of music at your feet for three-and-nine a week." She knew that they could afford *that*; anyone in their position could afford three-and-nine a week. Even fifteen shillings a month did not sound impossible. It was only the original eighteen guineas that was altogether out of the question; and that sort of outlay would go on being out of the question until the age of the money-box returned.

Admittedly, it wouldn't be the only amount they were paying. There was eleven-and-threepence a week to pay on the sideboard and on the altogether too wooden-looking refectory table that seemed to fill the dining-room. And there were four more instalments—big ones: three or four pounds a time—to pay on their bedroom suite. She knew all that, and the thought of it often frightened her. But it was

the same with everyone. They weren't living on credit any more than the rest of their neighbours. With the exception of one or two elderly couples who had retired to Boleyn Avenue and brought their bits of bamboo and rosewood with them, the residents were all youngish people who were in the same sort of fix. If the furnishers had called in their half-paid-for stock, the standard of living in Boleyn Avenue would have dropped overnight to a peasant level. But as it was, the weekly and monthly payments went on. There were pianos and wireless sets and refrigerators in all the houses. And every wife, proud of her home, sat contentedly back looking on while her husband devotedly sold himself into slavery not only to the one master he already worked for, but to half a dozen extra ones as well.

NORMAN COLLINS: *Love in Our Time*

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